

Is Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal identity a *gopa* or a *mañjarī*?

The purpose and reasoning for writing this is as follows. There is a widespread consensus in the Vaiṣṇava community that Śrīla Prabhupāda must be a *gopī*, and specifically a *mañjarī*, primarily because many, if not most of the previous Gauḍīya *ācāryas*, were *mañjarīs*, either by their own revelation, or by the statements of other accepted authorities.

This thinking then directly leads to the mistaken idea that every *guru* in the Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava line, as well as their disciples, are expected to be *mañjarīs*, because that is what Śrī Rūpa and the other Gosvāmīs are and that is what Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's special gift was to humanity.

Most devotees have heard and read repeatedly from numerous contemporary Vaiṣṇavas that because *mañjarīs* are the "highest" of all types of *gopīs*, we should therefore, on that basis alone, strive for that goal, as if it was expected or even a mandate, or as if choosing one's *rasa* is predicated on what is better or higher. Nothing could be further from the truth, as those who have read the statements by our *ācāryas* in my book now understand.

It is proven conclusively in the main body of my book (Chapter 5) that this is not at all correct, and in fact, no such mandate can be found directly or even remotely implied in the texts of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, or Śrīla Prabhupāda. Specific details related to *mañjarīs* are given in several places, but not in the context of, "everyone must do this", rather, "for those who desire it, this is how it's done".

What is clearly and repeatedly expressed by all *ācāryas* is that one's *rasa* is a private personal choice based solely on one's own heart felt spontaneous attraction to serve Kṛṣṇa in a particular mood, as inspired by a chosen resident of Vraja, whose example one then follows. It is a natural attraction that arises when one hears about the Vraja pastimes involving the residents of Vraja.

This was discussed in detail in Chapter 5 of this book, but here again is one of many examples from Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*:

Which *rasa* the soul has is determined by the soul's innermost tendency of taste. When faith in the chanting process arises, according to his taste he will gravitate to his own *rasa*. Determining that *rasa*, the *guru* will give him suitable initiation for carrying out his worship. CS, Chapter 6, Part 5

That being said, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has revealed the confidential details of his *rasa* as a *mañjarī* in several of his books, most notably, *Jaiva-dharma* and *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*. In those books he describes how *sādhakas* should meditate on their *siddha-deha* and the details he lists are those of a *mañjarī*, and specifically, his own characteristics as a *mañjarī*.

Similar details are given in Dhyānacandra's *Gaura Govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati*, which was discussed thoroughly in my book. It was shown that these recommendations are specifically for *sādhakas* who do in fact aspire to be *mañjarīs*, but they are not presented as the only path or as a mandatory path. I have shown that Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and all other *ācāryas* state

repeatedly throughout their writings that one's *rasa* manifests from one's heart according to one's taste. It is not to be assigned or forced on anyone by their *guru*.

The standard arguments for Śrīla Prabhupāda being in *mañjarī-bhāva* routinely refer first to Viśvanātha Cakravartī's *Guruvastakam*, verse six, where it is stated that the spiritual master assists in the arrangement of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa's intimate pastimes in the *kuñjas*. So therefore, Śrīla Prabhupāda must be a *gopī* or *mañjarī*, because no *gopas* are involved with these pastimes.

A number of other arguments are made, but rather than try to restate them and then be criticized for not presenting them accurately, I thought it would be better to respond to the key points made in a lengthy and comprehensive article posted online by my Godsister, Jadurani/Syamarani dasi. Her article was written (2000) as a direct response to an article in VNN by BV Tripurari Svāmi, as well as to a book titled, *O My Friend*, which is the most comprehensive compilation of information related to Śrīla Prabhupāda being in *sakhā-bhāva* as a *priya-narma-sakhā*.

Because Jadurani is also a student of Śrīla B.V. Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja, her arguments embody his views as well, as she states in the article. Her article also contains most, if not all of the arguments I've heard and read by others. I'm going to provide a summary from her own statements, of each of the main arguments made in her article, including my response to each point. To be fair, I have included Jadurani's complete article for the readers to review after the section with my rebuttals.

I'm not going to respond to every single statement in Jadurani's lengthy article, just the key arguments, and so I have removed paragraphs that I felt were restating the same points. I have been careful to make sure that what was removed did not change the essence of her presentation. Nor do the removed portions have any evidence that defeats my responses.

Please understand that I am not attacking or criticizing Jadurani personally for her statements or her heart felt beliefs. I am presenting the *śāstric* and other direct evidence which proves conclusively that the core arguments she presents are not correct as stated. Naturally, I leave it to the readers to come to their own conclusions.

As a preface to my rebuttal I'm also including this section from my book, **Is *mañjarī-bhāva* the highest and only *rasa* for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas?** which has all of the details related to *mañjarī-bhāva*. It's important to have a full comprehension of this topic as it will aid in understanding the details of my rebuttal. There is some redundancy between my book excerpt and my rebuttal, so please overlook that.

Is *mañjarī-bhāva* the highest and only *rasa* for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas?

As previously mentioned, many Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas promote *mañjarī-bhāva* as the highest and best *rasa*. In some cases these devotees say it is the only *rasa* to aspire for, or that it is the only way to enter *mādhurya-rasa*. It's almost as if it's considered mandatory. Supposedly, there are even members of Advaita *ācārya*'s lineage who claim that *He* is a *mañjarī*, when everyone knows *He* is an incarnation of Mahā-viṣṇu!

Although it may be a bit risky to include this section, because there is the strong likelihood that I will be criticized by fervent *mañjarī* proponents, I am compelled to do so on the basis of an unbiased objective review and analysis of our *ācāryas*' writings, which will provide incredibly revealing information on this subject. To be clear, my intent in this section is to examine what the *ācāryas* have written without any bias. I am not personally promoting any particular *rasa* over another.

It has already been established conclusively in the previous section how your *rasa* is revealed through natural spontaneous attraction and personal preferences. And, as stated before, there is no mention or indication by Rūpa Gosvāmī of the superiority or preference for being a *mañjarī*, in either *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* or *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* – the pre-eminent books on *bhakti-rasa* – as taught to him directly by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. One would certainly expect to find any such preferences within those books.

Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī's *Gaura Govindārcana-smaraṇa-paddhati*,¹ which will be discussed further on in this chapter, is focused solely on developing one's *rasa* as a *mañjarī*. This is no surprise, because the knowledge therein comes directly from Lord Caitanya's most intimate associate, Svarūpa Dāmodara, who is Lalitā, under whom many primary *mañjarīs* (Rūpa-*mañjarī*, Rati-*mañjarī*, and so on) serve in *kṛṣṇa-līlā*. It makes complete logical sense. It is interesting to note however, that Dhyānacandra never uses the specific term, *mañjarī-bhāva*, nor do the other *ācāryas*. He does use the term *gopī-bhāva*, which is a general and all-inclusive term.

It is well known that most of our Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* are *mañjarīs*. Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura, who is Kamalā-*mañjarī*, even revealed his personal *ekadāśa-bhāvas* in *Jaiva-dharma* and *Harināma-cintāmaṇi*. As is to be expected, they were all speaking according to their own experiences and realizations, which is precisely how *ācāryas* teach.

The analysis in this section will focus primarily on *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. In *Jaiva-dharma*, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes the following about the five types of *sakhīs* in Rādhā's group, as part of the summary of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* being discussed between the main characters.

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: There are two kinds of *svapakṣā-sakhīs* (Rādhā's *sakhīs*). Those whose affection for Kṛṣṇa is the same as their affection for their *yūtheśvarīs* are *sama-snehā*, and those whose affection for Kṛṣṇa and their *yūtheśvarīs* is not equal are *asama-snehā*.

¹ Please refer to the Appendix for more information on Dhyānacandra Gosvāmī and Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī.

Vijaya: Who are the *sakhīs* who have *asama-snehā*?

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: There are two types of *asama-snehā sakhīs*. Some have more affection for their *yūtheśvarīs* than for Kṛṣṇa, while other *sakhīs* think, “I am the maidservant of Hari.” They do not mix with other groups, and they have complete affection for their *yūtheśvarīs*, but they have still more affection for Kṛṣṇa.

Alternatively, those *sakhīs* who think, “I am the maidservant of my *sakhīs*,” and who have more affection for their *sakhīs* than for Kṛṣṇa are called *sakhī-snehā-adhikā*.

Vijaya: Who are they?

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: Among five types of *sakhīs*, those who have more affection for Kṛṣṇa (*kṛṣṇa-snehā-adhikā*) are simply called *sakhī*. The *prāṇa-sakhīs* (prominent *mañjarīs*) and *nitya-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) are both *sakhī-snehā-adhikā*, for they have more affection for their *sakhī* (Rādhā).

Vijaya: Who are the *sama-snehā sakhīs*?

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: Those who have equal affection for both Kṛṣṇa and their *yūtheśvarīs* are *sama-snehā*.

Vijaya: Who are the best among all the *sakhīs*?

Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī: The best of all are those who consider themselves Śrī Rādhā’s nearest and dearest, although they love both Śrīmatī Rādhikā and Kṛṣṇa equally. They are called *priya-sakhīs* and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*. JD, Chapter 34, Page 736

The “best of all” the *sakhīs* as stated by Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura are the *priya-sakhīs* and the *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* (*aṣṭa-sakhīs*), not the *mañjarīs*. In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Viśvanātha Cakravartī provides an analysis of the relative positions among the five types of Rādhā’s *sakhīs*, which was the original basis for Śrīla Bhaktivinoda’s statements:

In Rādhā’s group, which is the best of all, there are beautiful women decorated with all good qualities, who completely attract Kṛṣṇa. The *sakhīs* of Rādhā are of five types: *sakhī*, *nitya-sakhī*, *prāṇa-sakhī*, *priya-sakhī* and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhī*. UN, 4.49-50

The *sakhīs* are women like Kusumikā, Vindhyā, and Dhaniṣṭhā. The *nitya-sakhīs* include Kastūrī and Maṇi-maṇjarikā.. UN, 4.51v

The *prāṇa-sakhīs* include Śaśimukhī, Vāsanti, and Lāsikā. All these three types generally have the same qualities as Rādhā. UN, 4.52

From Śrī Viśvanātha’s commentary:

Imāḥ means the *sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs*. They are generally almost equal to Rādhā in terms of *prema*, beauty and good qualities. This means that they are not

completely equal to Her. Those who are truly equal (to Rādhā) are the *priya-sakhīs*, and *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*.

Though there are five types, one should understand that there are also two types, those with equal affection (*sama-snehā*) and those with unequal affection (*asama-snehā*). This will be explained later.

“If you say they are almost equal, then the *sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs* are somewhat inferior to Rādhā. This would mean they are servants as defined by the phrase “*tulya-rūpa-guṇā sakhyah kiñcin nyūnās tu dāsikāḥ*: the servants are slightly less in qualities than the friends, whose qualities and form equal the queens.” (UN, 3.8)

That is not so. This statement concerning servants says they are somewhat equal or similar. This means that they are somewhat less than leaders. Thus, “being less” is of two grades. Similarity of qualities may be suitable or unsuitable for gaining respect. Those whose qualities are suitable, who have equal qualities by their nature are *sakhīs*. Those whose qualities are unsuitable, and have fewer qualities by their nature are servants. Thus, there is no fault. UN, 4.52, Commentary

Once again, clarity and understanding that is impossible to interpret any other way than as presented. Moving on, in Chapter 8 of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, additional differences are explained in relation to the grades of *prema* of these five groups of Rādhā’s *sakhīs*, as well as their relationships to Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is a long excerpt, but the knowledge presented is invaluable and is best comprehended in its entirety. It also provides a look into the complexities and inner workings of *mādhurya-rasa* as presented in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*.

Those who have equal love (*sama-snehā*) for Kṛṣṇa and the group leader (Rādhā), who identify themselves as belonging to Rādhā, are *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* and *priya-sakhīs*. UN, 8.137

From Śrī Viśvanātha’s commentary:

...”If there are three types of *sakhīs* – with more affection for Kṛṣṇa, more affection for Rādhā and equal affection for both – then why was it explained previously that there are five types? There are two varieties corresponding to their amount of love for those with more affection for the group leader (*prāṇa-sakhī* and *nitya-sakhī*) and for those with equal affection (*parama-preṣṭha-sakhī* and *priya sakhī*).

Why is there only one variety (*sakhī*) for those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa? There should be two varieties also for those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa. Do those *sakhīs* also not have grades of *prema*? And if those with equal affection are the best, then those with more affection either for the group leader or for Kṛṣṇa should be equally inferior.

Why are those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa, such as Kusumikā and Vindhyā, placed at the bottom? If you say that Kṛṣṇa is attracted to those who have more affection for the group leader, because She is dear to Him, then Rādhā should be attracted to those who have more attraction for Kṛṣṇa, because He is dearest to Her. If you say that the names

(i.e., the five types of *sakhīs*) are given by Kṛṣṇa because He is satisfied with them, why cannot Rādhā give the names?”

One should understand the conclusion to these points. *Sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs*, *prāṇa-sakhīs*, *priya-sakhīs*, and *priya-narma-sakhīs* actually all have successively greater *prema* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is the significance of those names (i.e., the five types of *sakhīs*).

Those who have more affection for Kṛṣṇa are the *sakhīs*. The *nitya-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) have more affection than them for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa but they are called *sakhīs* with more affection for the group leader because they have slightly more affection for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa (*asama-snehā*).

The *prāṇa-sakhīs* (principal *mañjarīs*) have more affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa than the *nitya-sakhīs*, and slightly more affection for Rādhā. They are also called *sakhīs* with more affection for the group leader.

Those who have more affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa than the *prāṇa-sakhīs* but also have equal affection for both are the *priya-sakhīs*. They are called *sakhīs* with equal affection (*sama-snehā*).

The *priya-narma-sakhīs* (*parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*, i.e., *aṣṭa-sakhīs*) have even more affection than the *priya-sakhīs* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but equal affection for both. They are also called *sakhīs* with equal affection.

“Let that be. I do not object to the successively higher statuses. But just as those with more affection for the *sakhī* (Rādhā) have two varieties – *nitya-sakhīs* and *prāṇa-sakhīs*, so those with more affection for Kṛṣṇa should have two varieties – *sakhī* and *snigdha-sakhī*. Why not? Because of this, I am bewildered.”

That is true. It has previously been explained in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* that attaining the position of a *gopī* cannot take place without *rāgānugā-bhakti*. And without following after the *nitya-siddha gopīs*, *rāgānugā* cannot be perfected. *Rāgānugā* means to follow after those *gopīs* who have *rāga*. Those three types who follow the *nitya-siddhas* attain perfection like the *nitya-siddha gopīs* but they exist eternally in a slightly lesser position than the *nitya-siddha gopīs* that they follow.

Having loyalty to the group leaders and their *sakhīs*, according to their own desires, the three types who follow the *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs* with equal affection for Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa become *priya-sakhīs* with a similar type of affection.

The three types who follow the *prāṇa-sakhīs* (principal *mañjarīs*) with more affection for Rādhā become situated eternally as *nitya-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) with more affection for Rādhā. UN, 8.137, Commentary

Viśvanātha Cakravartī’s explanations are astonishing, incredibly revealing and conclusive, to say the least. There is absolutely no ambiguity whatsoever. One of the key points made in Śrī

Viśvanātha's commentary above is: “*Sakhīs, nitya-sakhīs, prāṇa-sakhīs, priya-sakhīs, and priya-narma-sakhīs* actually all have successively greater *prema* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is the significance of those names (i.e., the five types of *sakhīs*).” Of course this does not mean that *sādhana-siddha jīvas* who become *priya-sakhīs* will be greater than the *nitya-siddha mañjarīs* like Rūpa, Rati, and the others.

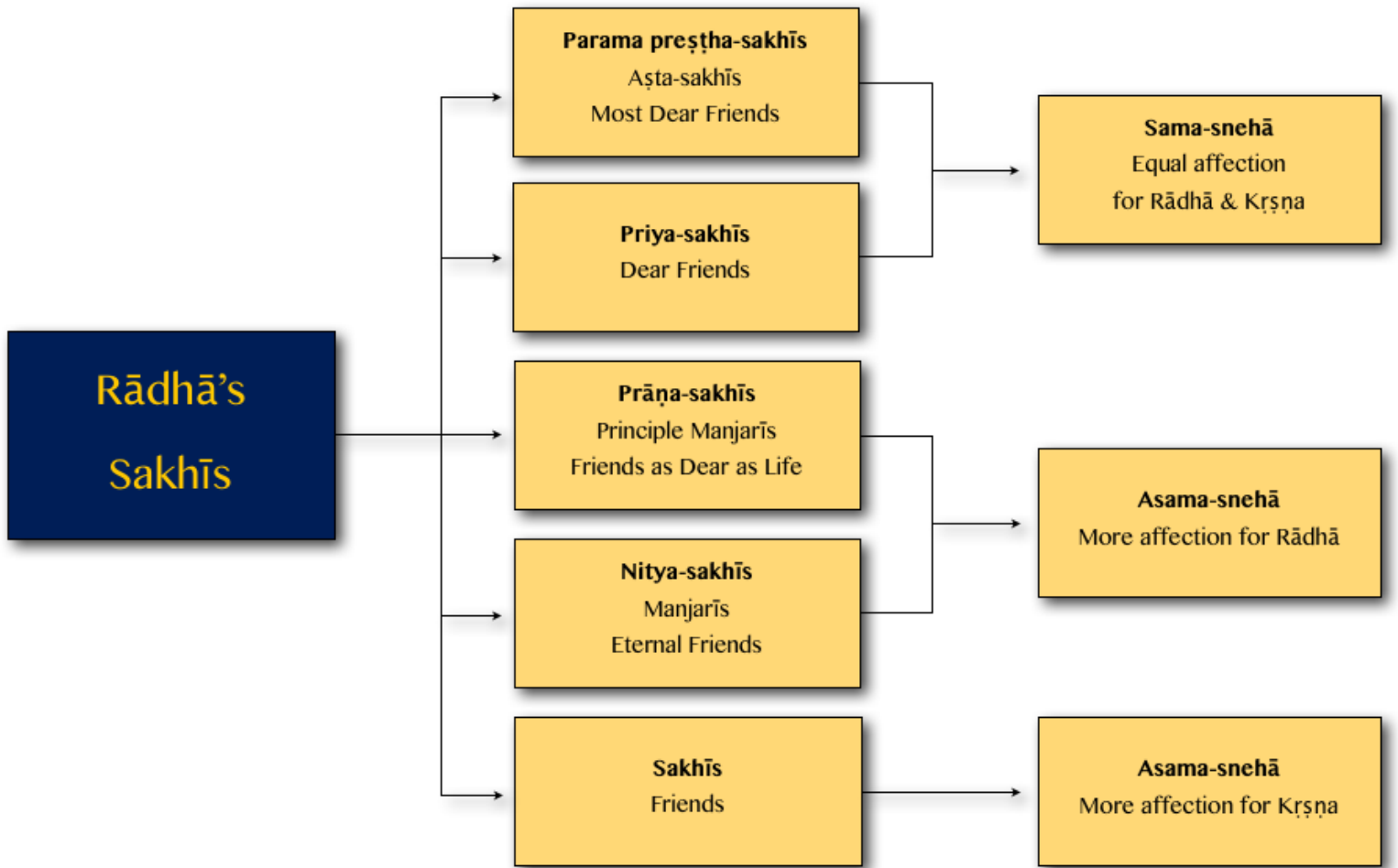
Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi is the quintessential text on *mādhurya-rasa* and Viśvanātha Cakravartī has given us invaluable deep insight into Śrī Rūpa's presentation. The conclusions are abundantly and unequivocally clear regarding the hierarchical disposition of Rādhā's various *sakhīs*. There are differences in levels of equality and *prema*, and the *mañjarīs* (*nitya-sakhīs*) are clearly not the topmost of all the *sakhīs*. *Priya-sakhīs* have more *prema* for, and equality with, Rādhā than the *mañjarīs*. Shocking to some, though this may be, it is nonetheless the truth of the matter.

But even more importantly, we can now understand from Śrī Viśvanātha's commentary that there are in fact, two types of *gopī-bhāva* or *sakhī-bhāva* which *rāgānugā-sādhakas* may aspire for and attain – either as a *nitya-sakhī mañjarī* following a *prāṇa-sakhī*, or as a *priya-sakhī* following any of the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, specifically in the mood of *sama-snehā* – with equal affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa.

Thus, *jīvas* who have attained perfection through *rāgānugā-bhakti* (*sādhana-siddhas*) gain entrance into *mādhurya-rasa* either as *nitya-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) or as *priya-sakhīs*. They accomplish this by following the *nitya-siddha sakhīs*, the eternally liberated *sakhīs* who are actually direct expansions (*kāya-vyūha*) of Rādhā, namely the *prāṇa-sakhīs* and the *parama-preṣṭha-sakhīs*. No *ācāryas* have advised following the *sakhīs*, the first group of the five types. This is essential knowledge for all devotees who aspire to enter *mādhurya-rasa* as part of Rādhā's group. This is the complete truth of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's gift of *ujjvala-rasa*.

The conclusions so far are that there is clearly no support whatsoever for the idea that being a *mañjarī* is the “only” *rasa* available for Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas who want to enter *mādhurya-rasa*, or even that it is the preferred *rasa* because you are part of a particular Vaiṣṇava group, which is an incorrect idea to begin with. Nor are *mañjarīs* the highest or best among Rādhā's *sakhīs* by the different measures presented – equality with Rādhā and *prema* for Her and Kṛṣṇa. Viśvanātha Cakravartī's statements are crystal clear. And keep in mind that these conclusions (*siddhantas*) are being presented by our *ācāryas* who, ironically, are all *mañjarīs*!

There are still other important points to be clarified. It is often stated that one of the special features of the *mañjarīs* is that only they experience Rādhā's emotions directly because of their intimate relationship with Her. But the truth is that it is not just the *mañjarīs* who have these vicarious experiences. All of Rādhā's *sakhīs* experience this astonishing phenomenon. In the following verses, the original Sanskrit is simply “*sakhīs*” and not specifically “*mañjarīs*.”



From Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja's *Govinda-līlāmṛta*:

Just as the moon enlivens the lilies, so Kṛṣṇa is the bright moon that enlivens the lily-like hearts of the residents of Vṛndāvana. His pleasure-giving potency is personified in Rādhā, who is like a vine with fruits of *prema*. Her girlfriends (*sakhīs*) are the unlimited branches, leaves and flowers that expand out from her self and are thus equal to her.

For this reason, when that winding vine of love is watered with the heavenly potion of Kṛṣṇa's sporting activities, then its leaves and flowers, the *sakhīs*, find hundreds of times more pleasure than if they were themselves to be sprinkled. There is nothing unusual about this. GL, 10.16

If Kṛṣṇa should touch Śrīmatī Rādhārānī, then lo and behold Her *sakhīs* start to tremble, they sweat, their bodily hairs stand on end, and tears well up in their eyes. And if Kṛṣṇa should carefully sip the spirituous liquor of Rādhā's lips, it is they who become intoxicated! This is truly something wonderful. GL, 11.137

The conclusion is absolutely clear – *all* of Rādhā's *sakhīs* experience Her emotions related to Kṛṣṇa, not just the *mañjarīs*. All of Rādhā's girlfriends are intimately connected to Her and experience the unlimited waves of Her *prema* for Kṛṣṇa, according to the nature of their

personal relationship with Her and the depth of their *prema*, as was explained by Viśvanātha Cakravartī. This is the highest confidential realm that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu opened to us all. He also experienced the waves of Rādhā's *prema*.

As discussed in Chapter 3, those devotees desiring to be part of Rādhā's group practice the type of *kāmānugā-bhakti* called *tat-tad-bhāvecchātmika-bhakti*:

From Viśvanātha Cakravartī's *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* commentary:

...*Tat-tad-bhāvecchātmika* means *bhakti* whose inspiration is the desire to taste the special *bhāva* in relation to Kṛṣṇa possessed by a particular woman of Vraja (Rādhā), whom one holds dear. This should be understood to be superior to the previous type. It is the chief type of *kāmānugā-bhakti*. BRS, 1.2.297-298 Commentary

Because we now know that aspiring devotees can become either *priya-sakhīs* or *nitya-sakhīs*, this means that both of them are following Rādhā's *bhāvas* (*tat-tad-bhāvecchātmika-bhakti*) and thus, both of these types of *sakhīs* will experience Rādhā's *bhāvas* as part of their experiences of *prema* and *rasa*. This is the correct and final conclusion (*siddhanta*). Any other conclusions should be considered unacceptable speculation, since they have no substantiation whatsoever in these writings by our *ācāryas*.

Moving on, supposedly, one of the key indicators of the superiority of the *mañjarīs*, as stated by their proponents, is that the *mañjarīs* get to witness the most intimate conjugal pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa by peeking through the openings in the private cottages, as described by Raghunātha Dāsa Gosvāmī in his *Vraja-vilāsa-stava*:

I take shelter of the handmaidens of the Queen of Vrindavan, led by Śrī Rūpa-mañjarī, who lovingly satisfy her by offering her betel nuts and other condiments, massaging her feet, bringing fragrant water and arranging trysts with her lover. Having thus become most dear to her, they are allowed to enter the scene of the Divine Couple's most intimate affairs without the slightest discomfiture, a reward not given even to Her dearest friends. VVS, 38

Notwithstanding that statement, Viśvanātha Cakravartī also describes this in his *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* commentary, but he simply refers to *sakhīs* and not specifically *mañjarīs*:

An example of *līlā-vilāsa*:

When Kṛṣṇa strongly embraced her, Rādhā scratched him with her nails. When He tried to kiss her, She blocked him with her arms. When Kṛṣṇa pulled her cloth, She struck Him with a water lily. He obtained greater joy from this than from union. UN, 15.254

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Sakhīs who gazed through the lattice holes relish the *līlā-vilāsa* of the couple. Two verses are given as examples.

Nonetheless, there is no disagreement that these are unique and remarkable aspects of the young *mañjarīs*' relationships with Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. This is a wonderful ornament of their *prema*. But in light of our expanded understanding so far, this can now be seen in its proper context. It is certainly not overwhelming and conclusive evidence of their superiority or higher level status among Rādhā's *sakhīs*. The *priya-sakhīs* also have opportunities for wonderful confidential pastimes that are unavailable to the *mañjarīs*, but it is beyond the scope of this discussion to expand on that here. These details are found in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* and the *līlā* books.

The *priya-sakhīs* are of different ages and relational moods towards Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, according to their individual dispositions and desires. They do not share the same attributes as the *mañjarīs*. As Rūpa Gosvāmī reveals in *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*, *mādhurya-rasa* displays unlimited variety, especially when it comes to Kṛṣṇa's *gopīs*. In *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi* he describes the 360 different types of Kṛṣṇa's lovers. And then he says there are many more types than that, but he didn't describe them for fear of increasing the size of his treatise!

It is said that the *mañjarīs* never desire to have direct intimate encounters with Kṛṣṇa, due to their particular mood of having greater love for Rādhā than Kṛṣṇa. The fact that most of them are very young (under 14) is also a contributing factor. This is because they typically display the attributes of younger girls, who relish associating with Rādhā and all of Her girlfriends, the older *sakhīs*, like the *priya-sakhīs* and the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*. (14-16).

Besides direct personal service to Rādhā, the *mañjarīs*' happiness is derived from seeing Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa together by their cooperative arrangements, and those moods and endeavors are also shared equally by all of Rādhā's *sakhīs*. All of Rādhā's *sakhīs* experience conjugal pleasure vicariously through Rādhā and some of them also experience it directly with Kṛṣṇa, as revealed in the *līlā* books. Only the *mañjarīs* prefer to abstain.

This does not imply that the *mañjarīs* therefore have greater *prema* than other *gopīs*, nor does it make them better than the other *sakhīs*. Rather, it makes them astonishingly and inconceivably unique, in light of Kṛṣṇa's endless amorous desires and all of the other *gopīs*' overwhelmingly powerful *samarthā-rati* for Kṛṣṇa in *ujjvala-rasa*. And considering that all the *gopīs* are obsessed with fulfilling Kṛṣṇa's conjugal desires and giving Him pleasure, the *mañjarīs* stand apart in this regard. They are truly remarkable because of that.

However, in Vraja, there are no hard and fast rules regarding amorous affairs. Kṛṣṇa's desires are pre-eminent and His ability to fulfill them is supreme. From *Ujjvala-nīlamaṇi*:

Arranging *sakhīs* to meet Kṛṣṇa by having them deliver written messages:

O violent girl! Give up this letter-carrying. O crooked eyes! Why do you look at me with that crooked glance? Read that letter written by Rādhā. In this hut in the grove there is a soft, fragrant couch made of flowers. This flower bed is calling you to lie down upon it through the loudly buzzing bees.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Rasāla-mañjarī says, “I am Rādhā's letter carrier. Why are you looking at me with lust? The messengers offer their lives, not their bodies. You know the nature of the messenger.” Kṛṣṇa replies with this verse. Give up this business of carrying letters. O violent woman! What irrelevant words are you speaking? You are not a messenger. If you do not give the letter, then read aloud the letter written by Rādhā. I have not done anything devious. “Coming to you, Rasāla-mañjarī will reveal the whole letter. Today O Kṛṣṇa, lover of the forest, do not violate my *dharma*.”

When you mention your friend Rasāla-mañjarī (mango bud) and that I am a lover of the forest, there is another meaning. That you should consider. *Dharma* can also be taken as *adharma* by *sandhi* rules. Thus your statement is unclear. But *dharma* is the quality of Her messengers and therefore all Her followers have *prema* for me. The meaning is true. **Then, having defeated her, he took her hand and led her to the bed.** UN, 8.66

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Rāmānanda Rāya describes to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu the nature of the *sakhīs'* relationship with Rādhā, and once again there is no specific focus on *mañjarīs* – quite the opposite:

Although the *sakhīs* do not possess even the slightest desire to enjoy themselves with Śrī Kṛṣṇa directly, still Rādhikā makes an active effort that enables them to meet with Him. She sends the *gopīs* to Kṛṣṇa, employing a great variety of clever ruses, as well as inspiring His heart with a desire to meet them. At such times, She enjoys a happiness ten million times greater than the happiness She experiences when directly meeting with Him.

Because the internal consciousness of Śrī Rādhikā and the *gopīs* is pervaded by *viśuddha-sattva*, or pure spiritual existence, Śrīmatī Rādhikā always remains engaged in continuously bestowing happiness upon the *gopīs* [Her *sakhīs*], and vice versa. They are ever absorbed in nourishing or expanding the sentiments of *rasa*. Upon seeing their mutual exchanges, Śrī Kṛṣṇa becomes most satisfied. CC, 2.8.211-213

At this point there should be absolute understanding regarding Rādhā's *sakhīs* (including the *mañjarīs*) and their relative positions within Her group. The explanations from the *ācāryas* that have been presented so far have challenged and refuted all of the commonly held beliefs about the *mañjarīs*, that were in fact, not entirely accurate, nor substantiated by the *ācāryas*.

Please be very clear that these conclusions do not diminish the glory of the *mañjarīs* in any way. Rather, they establish the correct understanding (*siddhānta*) of their unique and exalted status, free from unwanted speculation and unfounded bias. We should always seek the truth in all matters, especially confidential subjects like these. As usual, our *ācāryas* have provided that truth, pure and simple.

Another relevant topic related to this issue is the notion of Rūpānugās versus *rāgānugās*. Many devotees subscribe to the idea that there are two branches of followers of *rāgānugā-bhakti* as presented by Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. There are those who follow the general path of *rāgānugā-bhakti* and are thus known as *rāgānugās*, and those who specifically follow Rūpa

Gosvāmī with a desire to be *mañjarī*s in Rūpa-mañjarī's group, and they are known as Rūpānugās. These devotees even go so far as to proclaim that the highest followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu are Rūpānugās, and that no one can enter *mādhurya-rasa* unless they are Rūpānugās. They also say that those desiring *rasas* other than *mādhurya* are not true Rūpānugās.

Based on the knowledge we have examined in this section, we can now conclude with certainty that this idea is patently incorrect and is factually completely against the conclusions presented by our *ācāryas*, especially Rūpa Gosvāmī. After careful study of the books used herein for reference, I have found no such evidence from any of these *ācāryas* to substantiate this specific notion. The term, Rūpānugā, is not even used in their principal books. There are certainly many prayers by various *ācāryas* wherein they express their own personal desires to be part of Rūpa-mañjarī's group in Vraja, but none of them ever say that only followers of Rūpa-mañjarī can enter *mādhurya-rasa*.

Examining Śrīla Prabhupāda's statements regarding Rūpānugās reveals that in every single instance he has indicated that being a Rūpānugā means following Rūpa Gosvāmī and Sanātana Gosvāmī as *sādhakas*. In other words, a Rūpānugā is one who follows the external examples and principles established in Rūpa Gosvāmī's teachings in terms of one's *rāgānugā-sādhana-bhajana*. It is definitely not related specifically to a desire to be a *mañjarī* in Rūpa-mañjarī's group. No such connection is ever made by Śrīla Prabhupāda or by any *ācāryas* whose books we are studying.

In the Preface of *Nectar of Devotion* Śrīla Prabhupāda explains this:

The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is also based on the authority of Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are therefore generally known as Rūpānugās, or followers in the footsteps of Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda. NOD, Preface

Viśvanātha Cakravartī also explains this in *Rāga-vartma-candrikā*:

How to follow in the footsteps of the people of Vraja? In one's physical body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and other saints that lived in Vraja, and in the mentally conceived spiritual body one follows in the footsteps of Śrīmatī Rūpa-mañjarī and the other eternal associates of Kṛṣṇa. RVC, 1.11

Therefore, the "Rūpa" in Rūpānugā refers directly to Rūpa Gosvāmī and not to his Vraja identity as Rūpa-mañjarī. Thus, regardless of one's desired *rasa* – *dāsya*, *sakhya*, *vātsalya* or *mādhurya* – if one is following Rūpa Gosvāmī's teachings and principles on *rāgānugā-bhakti*, one is considered to be a Rūpānugā. The notion of being a Rūpānugā is used primarily and specifically to distinguish Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava followers of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu from Vaiṣṇavas in other lineages. These are the facts and the truth in this matter.

Yet another important side issue associated with this topic is that many devotees assume that all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācāryas* or *gurus* must be *mañjarī*s. This is, in part, connected to the Rūpānugā misunderstanding just mentioned. Most devotees try to substantiate this idea by referring to the *Śrī Guruvaṣṭakam* prayers by Viśvanātha Cakravartī, wherein verse six states,

nikuñja yuno rati keli siddhyai, which describes the spiritual master as being, “expert at assisting the *gopīs* in making tasteful arrangements for the perfection (*siddhyai*) of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa’s conjugal loving affairs (*rati-keli*) within the groves (*nikuñja*) of Vṛndāvana.”

Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked this same question, and in a letter to his disciple Jayapataka Svāmi. He replied:

“The prayers offered by Viśvanātha Cakravartī to his spiritual master have a special significance. **His spiritual master was one of the assistant *gopīs* (*mañjarīs*), so the prayer was offered like that.** On the whole, the spiritual master is an agent of Krishna. But either he is assistant to the *gopīs* or assistant to the cowherd boys.”

It’s hard to interpret this statement as anything other than an indication of Śrīla Prabhupāda’s inclinations towards *sakhya-rasa*. If he was a *mañjarī*, why would he bother to mention about being an assistant to the cowherd boys? None of the other *ācāryas* have mentioned anything like that in this context.

The most significant point, however, is that Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly indicated that this verse was written by Viśvanātha Cakravartī specifically for *his guru* – and not for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *gurus* for eternity. This is a very important fact that most devotees seem to miss about this verse. It is not an edict.

The *priya-narma-sakhā* cowherd boys are Kṛṣṇa’s most intimate friends, and they also directly assist in arranging these very intimate affairs. There is nothing they don’t know or understand about these highly confidential matters. From *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*:

The *priya-narma-sakhā* knows the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, covets the desire for Kṛṣṇa meeting the *gopīs*, and is the best among all the dear friends of Kṛṣṇa. In Gokula, Subala and Arjuna are *priya-narma-sakhās*. UN, 2.13

Jīva Gosvāmī’s commentary:

The *priya-narma-sakhās* have the desire that Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* meet each other. That is the meaning of their *sakhī-bhāva*. By this, their masculine sentiments are covered.

The *rati* of the *narma-vayasyas* (*priya-narma-sakhās*) extends to *anurāga*, but among them, Subala’s *rati* extends to *bhāva* (*mahā-bhāva*). UN, 14.233

It is thus not a foregone conclusion that every Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *ācārya* will be or must be a *mañjarī*, even though many, if not most of them are. The vivid case in point is Śrīla Prabhupāda, where all available evidence overwhelming points to him being a *priya-narma-sakhā* – a cowherd boy in *sakhya-rasa*, who assists Kṛṣṇa in His *mādhurya-līlā*.

Of course, I do realize that, having made that statement, I’ve just opened Pandora’s box so to speak. There are many devotees and disciples who assume, or have been led to believe, that Śrīla Prabhupāda must also be a *mañjarī*.

Several years ago, my Godsister, Jadurānī Dāsī (Śyāmarānī) wrote an article in response to my Godbrother Tripurāri Svāmī's article on this subject. He has also discerned that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *priya-narma-sakhā*, whereas Jadurānī is adamant that Prabhupāda can only be a *mañjarī*.

However, it's not in our best interest to divert the current discussion with a lengthy sidetrack because it isn't directly relevant. Instead, I've written a detailed response to Jadurānī's extensive article, countering all of her arguments with solid *śāstric* backup, and it is in a separate pdf file that was sent along with this book for readers' reference and review.

To conclude this section, I am not aware of any books by our *ācāryas* wherein there are contradictions to what has been presented here about this topic. The above analysis of our *ācāryas'* writings has provided conclusive evidence on this subject. Certainly, it is guaranteed to provoke many interesting discussions among Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas.

Everyone should follow their own aspirations and natural attractions towards a particular relationship with Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā, based on whichever Vraja associate represents the best model or example of their aspirations. And that brings us to our next subject: **Following a Vraja associate.**

As a short preface to this section, I am including the following anecdotes which I discovered after the release of my book, and which will resolve this issue once and for all. I could have used these alone to defeat all opposing arguments. I received this information from my Godsister, Mālātī Devī Dāsī. Here is her story:

In early 1968, Harṣarānī Devī Dāsī wrote a short, insightful poem in glorification of Śrīla Prabhupāda. In this poem, she referred to Śrīla Prabhupāda as a “cowboy.” While we (the little handful of fledgling devotees in San Francisco at the time) thought it was a bit childish, Śrīla Prabhupāda requested that it be printed in the next BTG (which were mimeographed and stapled together at the time).

You can find this poem on the VedaBase. Sitting with Śrīla Prabhupāda, we shyly asked him, “Are you a cowboy (keep in mind, we didn’t know the word “gopa” at the time)?” To which, he simply answered in a matter of fact tone, “Yes.” We never doubted or double guessed this information. We didn’t even know that it was not appropriate to make such an inquiry. Here’s the poem:

Dear Swamiji,
I offer my respects unto the Lotus
Feet of my Spiritual Master,
Who is always herding cows
In Goloka Vrindaban with His
Dearest Friend, Krishna.
Sometimes He is running barefoot
Through the forest chasing cows
And sometimes He is hiding behind
A tree waiting for Krishna to
Return with the spoils from
Mother Yasoda’s butter pots.
I offer my respects unto the Lotus
Feet of my Spiritual Master, Who is
Always thinking of what He can
Do in service of His Dearest
Friend Krishna and never wanting
Anything in return.

Another anecdote comes from my Godsister, Govinda Dasi. I am paraphrasing her story. Govinda Dasi gave Śrīla Prabhupāda a sweater (or shirt) that had embroidery with a western cowboy motif. When Śrīla Prabhupāda put it on, Govinda Dasi said, “Śrīla Prabhupāda, you look like a cowboy!” to which Śrīla Prabhupāda replied, “I AM a cowboy!”

Another incident involves a drawing Govinda Dasi did for use in the BTG and Śrīla Prabhupāda’s books. It depicted a scene where Kṛṣṇa and the cowherd boys were returning from the forests to the village with all of the cows at the end of the day. Govinda Dasi informed Śrīla Prabhupāda that one of the cowherd boys she drew represented him. When

this was pointed out to Śrīla Prabhupāda he did not object or say anything contrary. She wrote to me:

Both [stories] are true, but Prabhupāda was in India when I sent the drawing. The drawing was later colored in and is used as backdrops for altars in Vṛndāvana and else where, and also in BTG. It is Kṛṣṇa returning with thousands of cows. It was common knowledge amongst the devotees that Śrīla Prabhupāda often referred to himself as a cowherd boy, and even acted the part at the time. The ācārya persona was his public image, and also a very real facet of his diamond like personality, of course. But the cowherd boy identity was closer to his heart.

This anecdote comes from my godbrother, Bhakti Ananda Gosvāmi.

Once I asked Hansadutta if Śrīla Prabhupāda ever said anything about Dr. Achārya Prabhakar Mishra, who was Śrīla Prabhupāda's beloved first Disciple, his Sanskrit Tutor, and his co-founder of the League of Devotees. Śrīla Prabhupāda lived with Achāryaji for over 5 years and they had a very intimate friendship. Hansadutta replied that Śrīla Prabhupāda simply answered "He is the best".

Since I was blessed with the personal association of Achāryaji and Dr. Lal Batra, who both confirmed to me that Śrīla Prabhupāda's devotional mood was sakhya, I have accepted this as direct confirmation to me of what others have reported that Śrīla Prabhupāda himself actually said.

Their personal integrity and venerable Vaisnava character was above suspicion, and thus their direct testimony to me about Śrīla Prabhupāda and his teachings became my standard for what he really said.

However, Dr. Mishra and Dr. Lal Batra were both reliable authorities on Śrīla Prabhupāda, and because they told me that Śrīla Prabhupāda personally revealed himself as a cowherd boy, this is what I have accepted as the truth, coming from Śrīla Prabhupāda himself through them.

Is Śrīla Prabhupāda in the highest rasa?

[Abridged version - my rebuttals are prefaced by, **Response:**]

by Śrīmatī Jadurānī devī dāsī (Syāmarānī didi)

This presentation is a response to the recent VNN article of Puṇyapada Tripurari Mahārāja, in which he shared his idea that Śrīla Prabhupāda is in sakhya-rasa as a priya-narma sakhā, an intimate cowherd-boy friend of Kṛṣṇa.

The evidence quoted herein shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda, following in the footsteps of our previous rūpānugā ācāryas, is not a cowherd-boy. He is actually in mādhyura-rasa. He has instructed us by his own activities in a very specific way, one which is entirely consonant with the precepts of mādhyura-rasa given in our line. A careful study of his writings and recorded instructions, as well as the writings of other ācāryas, makes this very clear.

Although the subject matter of this article should normally not be discussed in a public forum, we were requested to do so by senior devotees, so that Śrīla Prabhupāda's position would not be misunderstood. If his position is misunderstood, then so also is his mission.

Śrīpad Tripurari Mahārāja's article states that it is "reasonable to conjecture" about the relationship of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Yet śāstra emphatically states, "tarko pratisthat srutayo vibhina: It is improper to conjecture or apply logic and reason to transcendental subject matter. Rather, one should simply receive perfect knowledge descending from a realized authority."

Additionally, our ideas must be clearly supported by śāstric evidence, and this process is established in the writings of our ācāryas. In his Dasa-mula śikṣā, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives the definition of amnaya, evidence, as follows: "The message of the Vedas received through guru-parampara is called amnaya. The Vedas and smṛti-śāstra (such as Śrīmad-bhāgavatam) which follow the Vedic version have been accepted as authoritative proof, as have different types of evidence such as direct perception, inasmuch as they confirm the Vedic version.."

For many years, I also used to tell devotees that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a sakhā. I was confused about his identity before I met Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Nārāyaṇa Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He brought light on Śrīla Prabhupāda's glory.

Access to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Lila

Śrīla Prabhupāda has broadcast the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Kṛṣṇa Book, Nectar of Devotion and Nectar of Instruction. If he were a cowherd boy, even the most intimate cowherd boy known as the priya-narma sakhā, he would not have had full access to the understanding of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa līlā, nor would he have been able to give his followers the complete understanding. Śrīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja Gosvāmī confirms this:

"The pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are very confidential. They cannot be understood through the mellows of servitude (dāsyā rasa), fraternity (sakhyā-rasa) or paternal affection (vātsalya rasa). Actually, only the gopīs have the right to appreciate these transcendental pastimes, and only from them can these pastimes be expanded. Without the gopīs, these pastimes between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa cannot be nourished. Only by their cooperation are such pastimes broadcast. It is their business to taste the mellows." (CC, Madhya 8.201-3)

Response:

The following statements from Rūpa Gosvāmī's *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, chapter 2, present a deeper understanding of the facts. Interestingly, one of the statements quoted below is by none other than Rūpa mañjarī herself, lest there be any doubt about the truth of the matter.

The *priya-narma-sakhā* knows the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa, covets the desire for Kṛṣṇa meeting the *gopīs*, and is the best among all the dear friends of Kṛṣṇa. In Gokula, Subala and Arjuna are *priya-narma-sakhās*. UN, 2.13

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

The *priya-narma-sakhās* have the desire that Kṛṣṇa and the *gopīs* meet each other. That is the meaning of their *sakhī-bhāva*. By this their masculine sentiments are covered.

For what service is fortunate Subala not qualified? He pleases Kṛṣṇa with pleasant words when Kṛṣṇa returns from playing and fighting. He makes beds for Kṛṣṇa in the bower which are suitable for the pastimes of Cupid. He intensely fans Kṛṣṇa, whose limbs are fatigued and perspiring as he lies on the heart of his beloved. UN, 2.14

Jīva Gosvāmī's commentary:

He fans the perspiring limbs of exhausted Kṛṣṇa. This is *udātta alaṅkāra*, because describing the main subject becomes secondary to describing his condition in an extreme state. Another version has *śaśvad vijayati priyānvitatayā svinnāṅgam etaṁ rahaḥ*.

Viśvanātha Cakravartī's commentary:

Rūpa-mañjarī speaks to a friend some words which produce devotion for Subala. He fans Kṛṣṇa who is perspiring. He does this by standing outside the room and using a machine.

Śrī Rūpa says the *priya-narma-sakhā*, "knows the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa." Not some of the secrets, or only minor secrets – "*the most intimate pastimes of Kṛṣṇa*". The meaning is indisputable. Rūpa mañjarī says indirectly that Subala is qualified for any kind of intimate service. Obviously, not the same intimate service as the *gopīs*, but the point is clear.

And to emphasize the point even more, in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, which is *the* singular definitive analysis of *mādhurya-rasa*, in almost every chapter there are statements between Subala and Kṛṣṇa or the *gopīs* regarding the most intimate dealings between Kṛṣṇa and all the *gopīs*, including Rādhā. If Subala has no access to these intimate pastimes, why is Kṛṣṇa talking about all these confidential details with him so much, and why did Rūpa Gosvāmī (Rūpa mañjarī) include them?

In Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's *Jaiva-dharma* (Śrīla Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja's translation), page 655, Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī says: "The *priya-narma-sakhās* are eligible for *śṛṅgāra-rasa* to some extent." To some extent means that obviously they don't have direct conjugal relations with Kṛṣṇa, but they are intimately involved in perfecting those arrangements, which is precisely what *Guruvastakam*, verse six states.

Jadurani:

Following in the Footsteps of the Assistant Maidservants

In 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his disciples the Śrī Guruvastakam prayers by Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and they have been singing these prayers to him since that time. Verse six, beginning "nikuñja yuno rati keli siddhyai", describes the spiritual master as "very dear, because he is expert at assisting the *gopīs* in making tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's conjugal loving affairs within the groves (*kuñjas*) of Vṛndāvana."

Response:

Śrīla Prabhupāda was asked this same question and in a letter to Jayapataka Mahārāja, he replied,

"The prayers offered by Viśvanātha Cakravartī to his spiritual master have a special significance. His spiritual master was one of the assistant *gopīs*, so the prayer was offered like that. On the whole, the spiritual master is an agent of Krishna. **But either he is assistant to the *gopīs* or assistant to the cowherd boys.**"

It's difficult to interpret this statement as anything other than an indication of Śrīla Prabhupāda's inclinations towards *sakhya-rasa*. If he was a *mañjarī*, why would he bother to mention about being an assistant to the cowherd boys. None of the other *ācāryas* have ever mentioned anything like that in this context.

Another important point is that Śrīla Prabhupāda clearly indicated that this verse was specifically written by Viśvanātha Cakravartī for his *guru* – not for all Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava *gurus* for all eternity. This is a very important fact about this verse that most devotees seem to miss.

Jadurani:

Every morning before his Śrīmad-bhāgavatam class he used to sing, "jaya Rādhā-madhava kuñjabihari, jaya gopī jana vallabha giri-varadhārī: Kṛṣṇa is the lover of Rādhā. He displays many amorous pastimes in the groves of Vṛndāvana. He is the lover of the gopīs, the lifter of Govardhana".

Puṇyapada Tripurari Mahārāja has given a poem about Subala-sakhā serving in the forest bowers (kuñjas), though he did not give a śāstric reference for that poem. A cowherd boy would not sing this song.

Response:

As mentioned in several responses above, the statements of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* explain how the *priya-narma-sakhās* are most definitely involved in these very confidential arrangements, and as such it would be completely appropriate for a *priya-narma-sakhā* to sing this song. Thus, Jadurani's point is not valid, due to incomplete knowledge.

Jadurani:

In the Caitanya-caritamṛta it is said that only by following in the footsteps of the gopīs can one serve in the kuñjas of Vraja (Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kuñjaseva). Both Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāya Ramananda have clearly told this:

"Without the help of the gopīs, one cannot enter into these pastimes. Only he who worships the Lord in the ecstasy of the gopīs, following in their footsteps, can engage in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the bushes (kuñjas) of Vṛndāvana. Only then can one understand the conjugal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There is no other procedure for understanding."

Response:

The above verse is talking about becoming a *gopī* and it is absolutely true that to become a *gopī* one must take shelter of the *Vraja gopīs*. But that is an entirely different issue. *Priya-narma-sakhās* are a special class of *sakhās*, and as such they are not just fraternal friends of Kṛṣṇa like the other *sakhās*.

In *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, Chapter 7, Part 7, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states:

The most confidential friends, Arjuna and Subala, *priya-narma-sakhās*, understand the mood of the *gopīs* and know their most intimate secrets.

Jadurani:

Kṛṣṇa's Dance Party

The process brought to the western world by Śrīla Prabhupāda enables his followers to enter into and serve in Kṛṣṇa's rāsa-līlā dance. Only the gopīs join in this pastime. This and the following quotes reveal his ultimate purpose:

This is spontaneous; this is life. And that is our real life in the spiritual world...The Vedānta says that God is anandamāyā, full of bliss and pleasure. We are part and parcel of God; we are also of the same quality. Anandamayo 'bhyasat. So our whole process is to join the supreme anandamāyā, Kṛṣṇa, in His dance party. That will make us actually happy." (Lecture Los Angeles Feb 13 1969)

Response:

Śrīla Prabhupāda was presenting these glories of Kṛṣṇa to the world because that is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's mission – to present the full scope of Kṛṣṇa *bhakti*. But in presenting this information it cannot be implied that he expects every single disciple to be in *mādhurya-rasa* simply because he described it as the highest. He knows the *bhakti śāstras* too well to think like that. It is completely illogical to make such assumptions and impose them on Prabhupāda's statements. And the fact is that Kṛṣṇa dances with the cowherd boys every day too. Plus, the *guru* does not impose a *rasa* on a disciple, as was explained extensively in Chapter 5.

Jadurani:

Śrīla Prabhupāda would not promise his followers that he could give them a relationship with Kṛṣṇa which he himself does not have and is thus not able to give. "Unless one practices devotional service himself, he cannot teach it to others. This conclusion is indeed confirmed throughout the Gītā and Bhagavatam." (C.c. Adi 3.21)

Response:

First of all, the idea that the *guru* "gives or teaches a particular *rasa*" to a disciple is completely wrong and not supported by any *ācāryas*. That is not what this quote from *Caitanya-caritamṛta* means. So the whole premise of the argument is flawed from the beginning.

Nevertheless, the other point being made is whether Śrīla Prabhupāda could understand *mādhurya-rasa* as a *sakhā*. From *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, chapter 14:

The *rati* of the *narma-vayasyas* (*priya-narma-sakhās*) extends to *anurāga*, but among them, Subalā's *rati* extends to *bhāva* (*mahābhāva*). UN, 14.223

There are some classes of *gopīs* who do not attain the highest stage of *mahābhāva*, as Rādhā and Her *sakhīs* do, whereas the *priya-narma-sakhās* can attain *anurāga*. Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda is in fact, qualified to "guide" his disciples in *mādhurya-rasa*.

The fact is that qualified devotees aspiring for *mādhurya-rasa* and engaged in *rāgānugā-sādhana*, must internally place themselves under the direct care and guidance of the Vraja *gopī* who's *bhāva* they aspire to emulate, and thus at that stage that Vraja *gopī* becomes the primary *guru* guiding the *sādhaka*, not one's *dīkṣā guru*.

In addition, as we read in Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Jaiva-dharma*, Vijaya was sent by his *dīkṣā guru* to a qualified *rasika śikṣā guru* to learn the confidential details of *rāgānugā-bhakti*, clearly implying that a disciple's progress and success does not depend solely on one's *dīkṣā guru*.

Jadurani:

Rupanuga-Bhakti and Manjari Bhava

In the preface to Nectar of Devotion, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is also based on the authority of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are therefore generally known as Rupanugas, or followers in the footsteps of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda."

This *unnatojvalla rasa*, or *madhuryojjvala-rasa*, is the same gift that Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to bestow. This is the gift of all *ācāryas* who are strictly in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. This gift of Mahāprabhu was not given by any previous *ācārya* or incarnation. Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He came to this world for two reasons: to taste the glory of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī's love and to engage the *jīvas* in Her divine service, (see *Adi* 4.15-16).

The following verse, appearing in *Caitanya-caritamṛta* (*Adi* 1.4) was taken from *Vidagdha-mādhava*, composed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau, samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasah sva-bhakti-sriyam

harih purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah, sada hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah

"May that Lord who is known as the son of Śrīmatī Sācīdevī be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali, by His causeless mercy, to bestow what no incarnation ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant spiritual knowledge of the mellow taste of His service." (*C.c. Adi* 1.4)

The last part of this verse may also be translated as, "what no incarnation ever offered before – *mañjarī-bhāva*, the service of Śrīmatī Rādhikā as Her confidential maidservant."

Response:

The word *mañjarī* does not appear in the verse stated above, nor is it implied exclusively or more so than *gopī bhāva*, which is what *unnatojjvala-rasah* is all about – the *gopīs'* intimate conjugal (*ujjvala*) pastimes with Kṛṣṇa. And even more importantly, because the *mañjarīs* do not have direct conjugal relations with Kṛṣṇa, but rather experience those moods vicariously through Rādhā (as all Her *sakhis* do), *ujjvala* most definitely does not imply directly or solely to *mañjarīs*.

To limit the translation to *mañjarīs* is a disservice to Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, who imposed no such limitations. I have proven in this book that one may enter *mādhurya-rasa* as a *priya-sakhī*, as well as a *mañjarī*. There is more than one choice, and the choice is according to the mood of each individual devotee.

Jadurani:

The pleasure that Śrīmatī Rādhikā experiences in serving and seeing Kṛṣṇa cannot be given to anyone, but the mood of the maidservant *gopīs* can be given. Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has therefore come only to give this mood of service to Śrīmatī Rādhikā, the mood of leaning more towards Her service than towards Kṛṣṇa's, but ultimately serving both.

"There were so many great devotees present as intimate associates of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—like the six Gosvāmīs, Śrī Svarūpa Damodara and Śrī Raya Ramananda, but this sloka (*śrī-caitanya-mano-bhistam...*), composed by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, was especially written to glorify Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Because he is Rūpa-*mañjarī*, he can understand the Lord's innermost desires, and give to the jīvas his own intimate service to Kṛṣṇa.

Śrīla Svarūpa Damodara and Śrīla Raya Ramananda were Lalitā and Viśākhā, and neither of their moods nor their specific type of service can be given. They serve Kṛṣṇa like Śrīmatī Rādhikā serves Him, in the sense that Kṛṣṇa enjoys *rasa* with them and they taste Him directly.

Response:

In response to the first statement, that Lord Caitanya came 'only' to give *mañjarī bhāva*. This is absolutely against all the *ācāryas'* teachings and conclusions, especially Rūpa Gosvāmī. Lord Caitanya came to give everything – all of *mādhurya-rasa*, not just one part of it. There are no limitations. Only in one's mind. To misinterpret Śrī Rūpa's teachings like this is very dangerous and is a total distortion of Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*.

Being a *mañjarī* is a unique and special *rasa* and it is attainable via Rūpa *mañjarī*, who is in Lalitā's group. There is no argument with that. But it is not the only *rasa* for aspiring devotees. Everyone must follow their heart and individual spontaneous attraction, and by the grace of Kṛṣṇa and guru, one can achieve one's desired relationship with Kṛṣṇa whatever it may be.

The last statement about Lalitā and Viśākhā, i.e., "and neither of their moods nor their specific type of service can be given", is entirely wrong also and is totally misleading to Vaiṣṇavas on the path of *rāgānugā-bhakti*. This misinformation will be quickly rejected by anyone who studies *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*. It is also not correct *siddhānta*.

According to *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, other than Rādhā's unique *bhāva*, all of the various moods of the *gopīs* can be aspired for and attained, including the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, whose examples one is always encouraged to follow if one wants to attain the *bhāva* of the *gopīs*. There are no such restrictions stated in *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, nor in any other writings of the *ācāryas*.

in fact, in every statement by all *ācāryas* regarding attaining *mādhurya-rasa*, one is directed to follow the mood of the *gopīs*, such as Lalitā and Viśākhā, etc. Of course no one can become as exalted as the *aṣṭa-sakhīs*, but one can attain their moods as a *priya-sakhī* and have direct conjugal relations with Kṛṣṇa as they and the rest of the *gopīs* do. Anyone who has read *Govinda-līlāmṛta* knows this.

There are no verses to quote from *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* because no verse exists there that says you can't attain those desired goals. The entire book is dedicated to describing the unlimited levels of variety within the *gopī* community, specifically to give one a clear picture and understanding of the vast scope of what *can* be aspired for and attained.

In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Rūpa Gosvāmī explains the *bhāva* of the *mañjarīs*, but he does not focus on the *mañjarīs*, nor does he state that their's is the only mood one can attain or should aspire for.

In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Chapter 8, *The Sakhis of the Heroine*, Viśvanātha Cakravartī comments on the gradations of the *sakhīs* – the *mañjarīs* are the *nitya-sakhīs* and *prana-sakhīs*:

One should understand the conclusion to these points. *Sakhīs*, *nitya-sakhīs*, *prana-sakhīs*, *priya-sakhīs*, and *priya-narma-sakhīs* (8 principle *gopīs*) **actually all have successively greater *prema* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa**. This is the significance of those names.

Those who have more affection for Kṛṣṇa are the *sakhīs*.

The *nitya-sakhīs* (*mañjarīs*) have more affection than them for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa but they are called *sakhīs* with more affection for the group leader because they have slightly more affection for Rādhā than for Kṛṣṇa.

The *prana-sakhīs* (principal *mañjarīs*) have more affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa than the *nitya-sakhīs*, and slightly more affection for Rādhā. They are also called *sakhīs* with more affection for the group leader.

Those who have more affection for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa than the *prana-sakhīs* but also equal affection for both are the *priya-sakhīs*. They are called *sakhīs* with equal affection.

The *priya-narma-sakhīs* (*parama-prestha-sakhīs*) have even more affection than the *priya-sakhīs* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, but equal affection for both. They are also called *sakhīs* with equal affection. UN, 8.137

So according to Rūpa Gosvāmī, the *mañjarīs* are not considered to be especially or uniquely exalted compared to Rādhā's other *sakhīs*. They are second on the scale of increasing *prema* for both Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, relative to all five groups. I explained this in greater detail in Chapter 5.

In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Chapter 5.102, Varieties of Heroines, Śrī Rūpa says:

When the eight features, beginning with *utkanthita*, and the three features, beginning with *uttama*, are added, there are 360 different kinds of heroines.

And before that Śrī Rūpa says:

According to the amount of *prema* and its transformations that the woman shows, as *uttamā*, *madhyamā* or *kaniṣṭhā*, Kṛṣṇa responds with similar love. UN, 5.97

Kṛṣṇa is unlimited and *mādhurya-rasa* is unlimited, ever expanding by the endless flow of His desires, as witnessed by the *rāsa* dance. Let no one artificially or incorrectly impose any restrictions on aspiring devotees. And remember, Rūpa Gosvāmī wrote *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* at the direct request of Lord Caitanya, and he is Rūpa *mañjarī*. What more can be said?

Jadurani:

The Rupanuga Vaiṣṇava Disciplic Succession

While singing the *sad-gosvamy-astakam*, Śrīla Prabhupāda had such deep feelings that he would sometimes weep. As a follower of the six Gosvāmīs, both externally and internally, he was engaged in his preaching mission and at the same time he was internally absorbed as a *gopī*-maidservant.

Response:

It is pure speculation to say that Śrīla Prabhupāda was absorbed as a *gopī* maidservant if one has no intimate access to such knowledge. Speculation like this is not conclusive evidence and is treading on dangerous territory.

Jadurani:

Our whole guru-parampara, from Śrīla Madhavendra Puripada up to now; Śrī Svarūpa Damodara, Śrī Raya Ramananda, and Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī and all his followers – all are sakhīs or mañjarīs. Śrī Svarūpa Damodara Gosvāmī and Śrī Raya Ramananda are Lalitā and Viśākhā respectively. The others, like Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Ragunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and so on, are mañjarīs.

If Śrīla Prabhupāda were a cowherd boy, he would not at all be in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Those who perform sādhana to become sakhās are not in the line of Rūpa Gosvāmī. They are rāgānugā Vaiṣṇavas, but not Rupanuga.

Rāgānugā-bhakti refers to all the mellow relationships with Kṛṣṇa, like friendship, parental love, and conjugal love. (See C.c. 8, 153-157). Svarūpa Damodara and Ramanada Raya are also not Rupanuga bhaktas. They are also not in the line following Rūpa Gosvāmī. They are the gurus of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. In our line – from Rūpa Gosvāmī – our entire parampara consists of Rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas. Surely Śrīla Prabhupāda cannot be a sakhā.

We do not know of a single instance where an ācārya in our Rupanuga line has a different svarūpa and service from that of his guru, in whose footsteps he follows. Sadhakas of sakhyarasa do not follow in the footsteps of Rūpa Gosvāmī or Rūpa mañjarī. They follow in the footsteps of Subala who, according to the Gaura-ganoddesa-dipika, is Gauridāsa Paṇḍita in Caitanya-līlā. Gauridāsa Paṇḍita is a rāgānugā ācārya in our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya, but he is not in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Response:

These statements are also speculation, word jugglery, and even beyond "reasonable conjecture", which was condemned in the beginning of the article. It makes no difference whatsoever what the *rasas* of other ācāryas are. Every disciple does not have the same exact *rasa* as their *guru*.

There are no statements anywhere in Vaiṣṇava literature which corroborate or even remotely imply that. It is repeatedly stated that one's *rasa* is according to one's spontaneous personal taste and desired mood. It is not imposed, or assumed, or restricted, because of one's *sampradāya*.

In addition, the original statements of *Ujjvala-nīlamanī* mentioned above again refute these conjectures about *sakhās* not being part of Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's line. Such statements are *apasiddhanta*.

Here is an excerpt from a conversation in Māyāpura, 1973, between Śrīla Prabhupāda and one of his first disciples, Hrsikesa dāsa (Richard Brown).

HD: *Gurudev*, what about *rūpānugā bhakti*? What is the eternal relationship between us (disciples) and you?

ACBSP: (Śrīla Prabhupāda quotes the 2nd half of sloka 6 of *Gurvastaka*) *Guru* is serving under his master and you all can do likewise. In *Nitya-līlā* every devotee thinks like that, that my master is the most dear to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

HD: So that means that my relationship with you is eternal, that it will continue in *Nitya-līlā*?

ACBSP: Yes.

HD: As *mañjarīs*?

ACBSP: Down to *sakhya*.

HD: But for 'Rupanugas' isn't it always *mañjarī-bhāva*?

ACBSP: Yes, that is the highest, but in the spiritual world there are no such distinctions. Every one is Kṛṣṇa conscious, even the (?) (something like flowers or clouds, i.e., a *śānta-rasa* example).

There it is, clearly, simply, and directly from Śrīla Prabhupāda's own mouth – "down to *sakhya*". If Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *mañjarī*, why on earth would he even bother to say that? If *sakhās* are not part of Śrī Rūpa's *sampradāya*, and have no access to these affairs, why would he say that directly in response to verse 6 of *Guruvastakam*? It makes no sense other than he wanted Hrsikesa (and all of us) to understand that his personal *rasa* was also included in that context.

Also, one of Śrīla Prabhupāda's most intimate friends and Godbrother was Akincana Kṛṣṇa Dāsa Bābājī Mahārāja, whom I personally associated with in Māyāpura several times. He was my *kīrtan śikṣā-guru*. I personally witnessed the loving mood between him and Śrīla Prabhupāda several times.

Hrsikesa had this to say about him:

"Also of interest is that Bon Mahārāja and Śrīla Prabhupāda both told me that their Godbrother, Akincana Kṛṣṇadas Bābājī Mahārāja (whom I served a fair bit) was a KRSNA sakhā as his *siddha prañālī* in *sambandhānugā rāgānugā-bhakti*, and they both acted like that was normal (or, rather, it was one of five bona fide *rasas*). Not considered as less than *mañjarī*."

In Jadurani's article it has been repeatedly stated that *sakhya-rasa* is not even part of Śrī Rūpa's teachings. Yet here, Śrīla Prabhupāda refutes that completely, showing that such statements are completely speculative, totally incorrect, and not based on a proper understanding of Śrī Rūpa's teachings or the other *ācāryas*.

Jadurani:

Again, Śrīla Prabhupāda directs us to follow in the footsteps of the gopīs:

To acquire this strong feeling of separation is the teaching of Lord Caitanya and His direct disciplic succession of Gosvāmīs. When we are not in physical contact with Kṛṣṇa, we can associate with Him like the gopīs, through feelings of separation. Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, qualities, pastimes and entourage are all identical with Him.

Response:

In *Caitanya-śikṣāmṛta*, Chapter 7, Part 7, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura states:

The most confidential friends, Arjuna and Subala, *priya-narma-sakhās*, understand the mood of the gopīs and know their most intimate secrets.

In *Jaiva-dharma*, Chapter 32, Page 693, Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura writes:

Vijaya: What are the symptoms of the *priya-narma-sakhās*?

Gosvāmī: They are privy to extremely confidential secrets and have taken shelter of the *bhāvas* of the *sakhīs*. Subala and Arjuna are prominent among Kṛṣṇa's *priya-narma-sakhās*. Thus, they are the best of all Kṛṣṇa's friends.

Thus, Śrīla Prabhupāda, as a *priya-narma-sakhā*, would be fully qualified to teach these confidential subject matters. The other point is that separation is absolutely not limited to the gopīs. When Kṛṣṇa is with the gopīs in the afternoon, the cowherd boys feel great separation. The above statements do not prove that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a *mañjarī*.

Jadurani:

Our Śrīla Prabhupāda received dīkṣā initiation from his Śrīla Prabhupāda, Śrīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Among the dīkṣā mantras is the gopāla mantra, which contains the words 'gopī-jana-vallabhaya-svaha.' This means, "I have accepted the same relation with Kṛṣṇa that is accepted by all the gopīs, i.e., "Kṛṣṇa is my beloved." Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained that this mantra is a gopī mantra, a mantra for developing the mood of the gopīs. It is for 'gopī bhāva āśraya', taking shelter of their transcendental loving sentiments. The kāmā-gāyatrī is also only for becoming a gopī. It is not for any other mood.

Response:

In Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's *Jaiva-dharma*, Chapter 21 on *rāgānugā-bhakti*, Vijaya Kumar and Vrajanatha both take initiation from Bābājī. At that point, neither of them had expressed the awakening of an attraction for a particular *rasa*. Bābājī gave them both the Gopāla *mantra* (eighteen syllable *mantra*):

Bābājī Mahasaya was very pleased to hear them speak in this way. He called them into his kutira separately, and bestowed upon them the *mantra* consisting of eighteen syllables. On receiving and chanting the *mantra*, they both became intoxicated with *mahā prema*, and started dancing, crying out, “Jaya Gauranga! Jaya Gauranga!”

Later in Jaiva-dharma, Vijaya Kumar expresses a desire for *sakhya-rasa*. In Sanātana Gosvāmī's *Bṛhad Bhāgavatāmṛta*, Gopa Kumar achieves his desired *sakhya-rasa* by chanting the Gopāla *mantra* as well. The Gopāla *mantra* fulfills all of one's desires.

Jadurani:

In 1959 Śrīla Prabhupāda took sannyāsa from his revered god-brother Śrīla Bhakti prajñana Kesava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is Vinoda mañjarī in Kṛṣṇa-līlā. The sannyāsa *mantra* Śrīla Prabhupāda received is the *mantra* of all sannyāsīs in the line of Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. It is a gopī-*mantra*, a prayer for becoming a gopī.

Response:

The *sannyāsa mantra* is, *om klim, gopī-bhāvāśrayāya svāhā*. It has been explained in several responses above that the *priya-narma-sakhās* experience certain higher levels of *bhāva* as the *gopīs* and are partially eligible for *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, so there is no contradiction, only incomplete understanding.

Jadurani:

The Role of the Priya-Narma sakhās

The confidential role of the *priya-narma-sakhās* is described in the Nectar of Devotion as follows:

There are other friends who are still more confidential. They are called *priya-narma*, or intimate friends. Counted among the *priya-narma* friends are Subala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Vasanta and Ujjvala. There was talk among the friends of Rādhārānī, the *gopīs*, about these most intimate friends. One *gopī* addressed Rādhārānī thus:

"My dear Kṛṣṇa [delicate one], just see how Subala is whispering Your message into Kṛṣṇa's ear, how he is delivering the confidential letter of Syama-dasi silently into Kṛṣṇa's hand, how he is delivering the betel nuts prepared by Palika into Kṛṣṇa's mouth, and how he is decorating Kṛṣṇa with the garland prepared by Taraka. Did you know, my dear friend, that all these most intimate friends of Kṛṣṇa are always engaged in His service in this way?" (Ch. 41)

This quote is additional evidence that Śrīla Prabhupāda is not a *priya-narma sakhā*. As a rūpanuga devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his siddha-śārīra as a maidservant of Rādhikā, would only serve Kṛṣṇa in relation to Her, not in relation to other groups of *gopīs*.

Response:

Yes Rādhā's *sakhīs* are loyal to her and against the rival parties. Let's examine the deeper layers for a complete understanding of the facts.

In *Ujjvala-nīlamanī*, Chapter 9, Lord Kṛṣṇa's Beloved *Gopīs*, Śrī Rūpa explains the very perplexing concept of rival *gopīs*:

There is no one inferior in *rasa* on earth than those who say that the followers of the Lord should not indulge in qualities like hatred. The personification of *śṛṅgāra-rasa*, the great friend of Kṛṣṇa, killer of Agha, who is more charming than a multitude of Cupids, exists in Vraja. When Kṛṣṇa is present, *śṛṅgāra-rasa* creates hatred and jealousy between the two camps of rival *gopīs* in order to please Kṛṣṇa. When Kṛṣṇa is absent, it produces affection amongst them. UN, 9.41-42

From these statements we can logically and correctly deduce that in this regard, Subala and the *priya-narma-sakhās* are therefore playing a unique and very important role in the expansion of *mādhurya-rasa*, impelled by the direct desires of Kṛṣṇa and for the ultimate pleasure of Kṛṣṇa, as well as all the *gopīs*.

Subala is directly serving Kṛṣṇa along with all the other parties in a very positive way to expand the *rasa* of conjugal love – *nikuñja yuno rati keli siddhyai*. Therefore, there is no contradiction or fault whatsoever, only a deeper understanding of these astonishing mysteries.

Jadurani:

Although there is a certain intermingling of *mādhurya-rasa* in the service of the *priya-narma-sakhās*, they follow in the footsteps of associates like Subala, not the *gopīs*. The *priya-narma-sakhās* serve in the *līlā* of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in their own way, and the *sevā* which they perform is clearly distinct from that of the *mañjarīs*.

Response:

Of course the *priya-narma-sakhā's* service is different from the *mañjarīs*, but that doesn't prove anything relevant. They are both assisting in the same exact pastimes. Rūpa Gosvāmī says this about Subala in his *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Ganodesha Dipika*, *Laghu Bhaga*, 44-46 (Śrīla Nārāyaṇa's translation):

He is immersed in serving Śrī Kṛṣṇa in various ways as His friend. He is most expert in arranging meetings between Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. He is absorbed in *madhura-bhāva* (amorous love) and is endowed by various good qualities, which bring joy to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Subala is extremely dear to Śrī Kṛṣṇa due to all these reasons. (44-46).

Even Śrīla Nārāyaṇa's footnote states: Subala is assisting Śrī Kṛṣṇa in His intimate amorous pastimes with Śrīmatī Rādhikā.

Jadurani:

The mañjarī's sevā, also described in the song "Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa prana mora" by Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, is the service upon which all the ācāryas in our line have meditated and instructed their disciples. This service is specific to the mañjarīs, who have special access to the lilās of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa.

Response:

The *guru* does not impose a *rasa* on the disciple. The instructions are given to help us fathom the vast ocean of the mysteries of *rasa*, but the choice of *rasa* is always based on the heart of the disciple and spontaneous attraction. There are no statements by any *ācārya* that the disciples are supposed to 'follow' their *guru's rasa*. This misunderstanding is completely in contradiction to the teachings of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Jīva Gosvāmī, Viśvanātha Cakravartī and Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura.

If a disciple is attracted to being a *mañjarī* he or she will be led there naturally by their own heart's desires, not by peer pressure to be in the 'highest' *rasa*. There still has not been one single quote in the article from the *ācāryas* to back up these claims. They are totally unsupported as I have proven in Chapter 5.

Jīva Gosvāmī, *Bhakti-sandarbhā*, Chapter 4, *Anuccheda* 310:

By hearing about this *rāga* from scripture or from one's teacher, one develops a taste for the actions of the *rāgātmika* associates also, that are expressions of this *rāgātmika bhakti*. Then by adhering to the *rāga* of a particular associate of the Lord, according to one's taste, one executes devotion, which is called *rāgānugā*.

CC: ML 22.161

"Kṛṣṇa has many types of devotees – some are servants, some are friends, some are parents, and some are conjugal lovers. Those who are situated in one of these attitudes of spontaneous love according to their choice, are considered to be on the path of spontaneous loving service.

Jadurani:

The *priya-narma sakhās* can touch *mahābhāva*, but not more than that. In *Jaiva-dharma* and *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* it is written that they can take shelter of some small aspect of *sakhī bhāva*. They cannot be like *Rūpa mañjarī*, who can even taste *Śrīmatī Rādhikā's* *madanakya mahā-bhāva* (the highest development of *mahābhāva*, which is not even found in *Lalitā* and *Visaka*). They cannot serve *Kṛṣṇa* and *Rādhā* while they are playing in the *kuñjas*. They can never go there. *Subala* may sometimes bring *Kṛṣṇa* to a *kuñja*, but he can never go inside and serve. The *gopīs*, on the other hand, can enter the *kuñja*, and they can also dress and decorate *Rādhā* and *Kṛṣṇa* there.

Response:

These statements are not correct. The *priya-narma-sakhās* do have access to these *kuñjas*. I quoted that verse before. In addition, *Rūpa Gosvāmī* says this about the *priya-narma-sakhās* in his *Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Ganodesha Dipika, Laghu Bhaga*, 41 (*Śrīla Nārāyaṇa's* translation):

There are no confidential topics whatsoever about which these *priya-narma-sakhās* do not know.

Jadurani:

Furthermore, *Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's* *Jaiva-dharma* describes a conversation between *Śrīla Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī* and his disciple *Śrī Vijaya Kumara*. *Gopāla-guru Gosvāmī* told his disciple that he should come and speak with him privately, not with *Brajanatha*, because *Brajanatha* was a follower of *Subala*, and therefore, had no *adhikāra* (qualification) to listen to his *mādhurya-kathā*.

Response:

Although *Vijaya Kumara* expressed a desire to follow *Subala*, he didn't specify the intimate aspects of *Subala's* service, only the cowherd *sevā*, and thus he was not eligible for hearing about *mādhurya*, as determined by his *guru's* evaluation of his desired *bhāva*. Thus, this point by *Jadurani* is not applicable. But it is very telling to note that *Gopāla Guru Gosvāmī* did not pressure him to become a *mañjarī* like his nephew. It was according to his own personal desires. Why didn't *Gopāla Guru* tell him to aspire for a "higher" *rasa*?

Jadurani:

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote a poem on his arrival to America in 1966 wherein he states his desire to frolic in *Vṛndāvana*, and therefore, some think that he is a *sakhā*: "O dear friend, in Your company I will experience great joy once again. In the early morning I will wander about the

cowherd pastures and fields. Running and frolicking in the many forests of Vraja, I will roll on the ground in spiritual ecstasy. Oh, when will that day be mine?"

Response:

This poem was written in Bengali, and the language was simple and straight forward. Here is a more accurate translation of that verse:

"Once we are together brother, I will once more feel the happiness of wandering all day long, grazing the cows. I pray for the day to come when we chase each other and wrestle in every one of Vrindavan's forests."

Does that sound like the prayer of a *mañjarī* who is focused on Rādhā? The actual opening word in the poem quoted above is, "Bhai", which literally means brother. To alter the translation to "O dear friend", simply to avoid that direct meaning is a very sad sign of grasping at straws. It is utterly ridiculous.

Bhai is also translated by Nārāyaṇa Mahārāja as "brother" in *Jaiva-dharma*, ironically when discussing Vrajanatha's *sakhya-rasa*! Listen to how similar Vrajanatha's moods are to what Śrīla Prabhupāda expressed. He even calls Kṛṣṇa, *Bhai*!

Vrajanatha: When the calves wander far off to graze, I would very much like to bring them back in the company of Subala. When Kṛṣṇa sits in a place to play upon His flute, I will take the permission of Subala to let the cows drink water, and then I will bring them to *Bhai* (Brother) Kṛṣṇa. This is my heart's desire.

Bābājī: I give you the benediction that you will attain Kṛṣṇa's service as a follower of Subala. You are eligible to cultivate the sentiment of friendship (*sakhya-rasa*). JD, Chapter 21, Pages 514-515

When the direct and obvious meaning is taken, there is absolutely no scope for *mañjarī bhāva*. And I challenge anyone to find quotes by or about the *mañjarīs* saying anything even remotely resembling, "In the early morning I will wander about the cowherd pastures and fields. Running and frolicking in the many forests of Vraja, I will roll on the ground in spiritual ecstasy." The same applies to the alternate translation. Such verses simply do not exist.

That's not what the *mañjarīs* do in the early morning, as anyone who has read *Govinda-līlāmṛta* or other *aṣṭa-kālīya-līlā* books knows. Only the cowherd boys are with Kṛṣṇa in the morning, not the *gopīs*. And *Mañjaris* never associate freely with Kṛṣṇa alone either. The *mañjarīs* are Rādhā's personal servants and they never desire to leave her side, except occasionally to deliver messages, so the line, "In your company", makes absolutely no sense for a *mañjarī* who loves Rādhā a bit more than Kṛṣṇa. They would never express their *bhāva* for Kṛṣṇa like that (*Bhai*?) and there are no verses by *mañjarīs* even remotely expressing such sentiments. It is simply ludicrous, totally wrong, and ignoring the blatantly obvious truth.

Jadurani:

Actually, this is also part of the speciality of Śrīla Prabhupāda's unnatojjvala-rasa, his constitutional position as a gopī. Śrīmatī Rādhikā can also do this. Sometimes She serves Kṛṣṇa like a mother, because the mood of mother is also there in Her, as stated in Śrī Caitanya Caritamṛta, Madhya 8.83-87.

Sometimes Rādhikā also serves like a sakhā, and in many of our Gosvāmī's literatures there are descriptions of this. Sometimes She wrestles with Kṛṣṇa, jokes, plays dice and other games, and engages in water sports with Him. In consequence, the divine existence of Śrīla Prabhupāda's poem is not an indication of a position as a cowherd boy.

Response:

Here is more incredibly twisted logic that actually results in *rasā-bhāsa*. When the *gopīs* play with Kṛṣṇa as described above, no where is it stated by any *ācāryas* that this is akin to *sakhyā-rasa*. The moods of Rādhā, Kṛṣṇa and the other *sakhīs* during these pastimes is a million miles away from *sakhyā-bhāva*. These pastimes are drenched with amorous sentiments and activities, as is evident from the reading the *līlā* books of our *ācāryas*.

Sakhyā-rasa does not mean, "cowherd boys." It means a relationship based on friendship. Arjuna is in *sakhyā-rasa* and he does not have the self-conception of being a cowherd boy. Similarly, the *gopīs* in *mādhurya-rasa* also have an element of *sakhyā-rasa*, but that doesn't mean they sometimes think of themselves as cowherd boys. That is an absolutely preposterous and unsupported idea. The *gopīs sakhyā* is the friendship of a lover, which has different characteristics from the friendship of the cowherd boys.

I have already shown above that Śrīla Prabhupāda's poem is precisely his revelation to us of his *sakhyā bhāva*, so the last sentence above is a false conclusion without any merit or logic.

Quoting one of the above referenced verses in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*: ML: 8.84, Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation:

Increasing love is experienced in various tastes, one above the other. But that love which has the highest taste in the gradual succession of desires, manifest itself in the form of conjugal love.

As stated in Śrīla Prabhupāda's *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* purport, this verse is actually from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*. Here is the translation from *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu*, along with Jīva Gosvāmī's and Śrī Viśvanātha's commentaries. Although the translation differs in *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* from Śrīla Prabhupāda's translation in *Caitanya-caritāmṛta*, Śrī Jīva's and Śrī Viśvanātha's commentaries directly explain the *Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu* translation.

These five types of *rati* progressively (the five primary *rasas*) become more blissful by increasing tastes. The particular taste arises in a devotee according to his previous experiences. BRS, 2.5.38

Jīva Gosvāmī's Commentary:

But what determines who takes up which type of *rati*? Is it decided by having no impressions of a particular *rati* from previous lives, by having an impression of one type of *rati* from previous lives, or by having impressions of many types of *rati*? In the first option – absence of impressions – *rati* cannot occur at all, because no taste could arise.

In the case of persons having impressions of many types of *rati*, a particular *rati* could not manifest prominently because conflicting tastes would result in improper manifestation of *rasa* (*rasabhasa*). Therefore, impressions of only one type carried from previous lives produce the specific taste.

Though not being in a position to perceive the depth of that *rasa*, one can confirm its identity by comparing scriptural descriptions of *rasas* with one's own inclinations, and by inference through seeing how *rasas*, different from one's own *rasa*, either nourish or fail to nourish the total ingredients.

Śrī Viśvanātha's commentary:

Among the various tastes such as sweet, sour and bitter, a particular person has a particular liking because of previous impressions. Because of impressions from past life of a particular *rasa*, such as *dāśya*, in this life also, the person has that taste alone and not others, by the mercy of a great devotee with a similar taste. This is the case for the two types of *dāśya* and the other three higher *rasas*.

This is a death knell for any arguments that *mañjarī bhāva* is the only *bhāva* of Rūpa's lineage, and that we must all be *mañjarīs* because it's the highest *rasa*, including Śrīla Prabhupāda. The manifestation of one's eternal *rasa* takes place over many lifetimes of impressions. It is not chosen or taught or given. It is inherent in one's own nature (*svarūpa*).

Jadurani:

Devotees who are eternally established in sakhya-rasa as priya-narma sakhās, as well as those sādhakas performing sādhana-bhajana to become priya-narma sakhās do not follow in the footsteps of the gopīs. They follow in the footsteps of Subala. This is explained in the Nectar of Devotion: "Devotees who are attracted to Kṛṣṇa as parents or as friends should follow in the footsteps of Nanda Mahārāja or Subala, respectively. Nanda Mahārāja is the foster father of Kṛṣṇa, and out of all the friends of Kṛṣṇa, Subala is the most intimate in Vrajabhūmi." (Nectar of Devotion p 129)

Response:

This is a non argument and proves absolutely nothing regarding Śrīla Prabhupāda's *rasa*. We are told repeatedly by all *ācāryas* to follow those who's mood and service we wish to attain. There is absolutely no mandate to follow the *gopīs* or *mañjarīs* and no one else.

Jadurani:

Empowerment by Śrī Nityananda

Pujyapada Tripurari Mahārāja writes: "Thus, it is reasonable to conjecture that Om Viṣṇupada A.C. Bhaktivedānta Śrīla Prabhupāda, who established the worship of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, Gaura Nitai, and Kṛṣṇa Balarāma so widely, was himself influenced by the bhāva of a priya-narma-sakhā, either directly or indirectly, owing to the influence of his empowerment by Nityananda Prabhu. In the case of the latter possibility, his affinity for mādhyura would have been veiled to some extent."

This idea may have come from the following information in a purport to Śrī Caitanya Caritamṛta:

One should always think of the spiritual master in terms of his intimate relationship with Mukunda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa)...following in the footsteps of Śrīla Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Śrīla Jīva Gosvāmī...In all the ancient scriptures of devotional service and in the more recent songs of Śrīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and other unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas, the spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī or a manifested representation of Śrīla Nityananda Prabhu." (C.c. Adi 1.46)

But these two viewpoints are not mutually exclusive. 'Either one or the other' is understood in terms of two different viewpoints, not two types of spiritual masters. Nityananda Prabhu, being non-different from Lord Balarāma, the original spiritual master, is akhanda guru-tattva, the embodiment of the complete principle of guru-tattva.

Response:

This is not solid logic – it is outright distortion. Śrīla Prabhupāda's words are *precisely*, "either, or" – one or the other. There is no insinuation whatsoever that these two should be considered merged. It also has nothing to do with different viewpoints or different types of *gurus*. This attempt to read inner meanings is not acceptable in the face of the obvious direct meaning of Śrīla Prabhupāda's statement. When you have to twist everything so much, it becomes obvious one's arguments are weak, if not completely non-existent.

Jadurani:

As such, the gurus in the line of Rūpa Gosvāmī are His direct manifestations and are empowered by Him. Yet, they are also maidservants of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī. In many of their songs they pray for the mercy of Nityananda Prabhu (Nitai Pada Kamala; Parama Karuna; Gauranga Bolite Habe etc.).

At the end of every chapter of his book, Navadvipa dhāma Mahatmya, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expresses his relationship with Lord Nityananda. At the end of chapter nine he writes: "Bhaktivinoda, within whom the ever-worshipable Jahnava and Nitai have appeared,

sings the glory of Nadia and the sweetness of the devotees, while tasting transcendental flavors."

Response:

Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's actual *dīkṣā guru* was Bipin Bihari Gosvāmī Mahārāja, which is another important controversial subject. Bipin Bihari's *sampradāya* goes directly back to Jahnava devī and Lord Nityananda and for this precise reason, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda expresses his love for his worshipable Lords. In Chapter 5 of this book you will find a copy of Śrīla Bhaktivinoda's *sampradāya* showing the complete lineage all the way back to Jahnava and Lord Nityananda in Gaura līlā.

Jadurani:

As quoted previously from Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary on 'nitai pada kamala', "If you actually want to enter into the dancing party of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, then you must take shelter of the lotus feet of Nityananda".

Nityananda prabhu is thus indicated as the embodiment of the complete principle of guru-tattva, who enables us to approach Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, through the grace of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore, according to the ācāryas, "the spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Śrīmatī Rādhārānī or a manifested representation of Śrīla Nityananda Prabhu."

Considering all of this, it is clear that the word "or" in the CC Adi 1.46 purport cannot be construed to simply mean 'one or the other'. Certainly it means that the identity of the spiritual master is to be understood both in terms of the principle of guru tattva, as well as in terms of the guru's mañjarī-svarūpa within the līlā of Goloka Vṛndāvana.

Response:

This is more unacceptable twisted logic, desperately struggling to make something fit a preconceived notion that has been repeatedly exposed as having no *śāstric* support, and in many cases is contrary to *śāstra* and Vaiṣṇava *siddhānta*. Nitpicking over such ridiculous minutia when the other facts are so blatant is not the accepted Vaiṣṇava philosophical process.

Jadurani:

There is another interesting point. Nityananda Prabhu has two forms in kṛṣṇa-līlā. One is Ananga mañjarī and the other is Śrī Baladeva Prabhu. Therefore, some of His associates in Goloka Vṛndāvana are associates of Ananga Manjari as mañjarīs, and others are associates of

Baladeva. In his Gītā Mala, Śrīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura speaks of himself as a follower of Ananga mañjarī.

Response:

Not surprising given that Śrīla Bhaktivinoda is in the lineage of Jahnavā Ṭhākurani, who is said by many *ācāryas* to also be an incarnation of Ananga *mañjarī*. So what? Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura has written in several of his books that his *rasa* is as a *mañjarī*. That proves nothing whatsoever about Śrīla Prabhupāda's *rasa*.

Jadurani:

Installation of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma and Gaura-Nitai Deities

In his May 3rd article, Puṇyapada Tripurari Mahārāja writes:

"My Guru Mahārāja did not institute the worship of Gaura-Gadadhara in any of his temples. Śrīdhara Mahārāja reasoned that this policy was based on his affinity for sakhya-rasa rather than mādhyura-rasa. Thus, he established the worship of Gaura-Nityananda and Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. Worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is also part of the sakhya-rasa of the priya-narma-sakhās, headed by Subala.

Thus, it is reasonable to conjecture that Śrīla Prabhupāda, who established the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Gaura-Nitai, and Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma so widely, was himself influenced by the bhāva of a priya-narma-sakhā, either directly or indirectly, owing to the influence of his empowerment by Nityananda Prabhu. In the case of the latter possibility, his affinity for mādhyura would have been veiled to some extent."

Tripurari Mahārāja indicates that because Śrīla Prabhupāda was a sakhā, he established Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma deities in Vṛndāvana, but Śrīla Prabhupāda himself explained it in a different way. The introduction of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitai was made especially for the benefit of the most fallen souls. In this way they might become eligible to worship Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. In a Caitanya-caritamṛta purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

Since there is no prominent Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple in Vṛndāvana, we are attempting to construct one so that people will be attracted to Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, or Nitai-Gauracandra. "Vrajendra-nandana yei, saci suta haila sei." Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says that Balarāma and the son of Mahārāja Nanda have advented Themselves as Gaura-Nitai.

To propagate this fundamental principle, we are establishing a Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma temple to broadcast to the world that worship of Gaura-Nitai is the same as worship of Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma. Although it is very difficult to enter into the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa pastimes, most of the devotees of Vṛndāvana are attracted to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa līlā.

However, since Nitai-Gauracandra are direct incarnations of Balarāma and Kṛṣṇa, we can be directly in touch with Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa through Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu.

Those who are highly elevated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can enter into the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa through the mercy of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu." (C.c. Madhya 6.281)

Response:

Śrīla Prabhupāda says right off the bat that he is establishing the temple, "so that people will be attracted to Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, or Nitai-Gauracandra", not Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, and, "we can be directly in touch with Lord Balarāma and Lord Kṛṣṇa through Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu". No mention of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa as part of the temple so far.

Śrīla Prabhupāda mentions Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa at the very end as a separate statement about entering into pastimes, and not as a logical flow from the previous statements, which were solely about the purpose of establishing the temple for Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma and Gaura Nitai.

How do you reasonably explain why, as a dedicated *mañjarī*, Śrīla Prabhupāda would choose to establish a Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple in Vṛndāvana, along with Gaur Nitai, Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma's manifestation in Gaur *līlā*? Yes, Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, along with Lalitā and Viśākhā are there too, but not in the prominent position. The central focus is on Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma. The name of the temple is **The Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temple!**

After hearing repeatedly from Jadurani that Śrīla Prabhupāda must absolutely be a *mañjarī*, who couldn't possibly have anything whatsoever to do with *sakhya-rasa*, our supposed *mañjarī guru* establishes a *sakhya* centered temple in the holy *dhāma*, and is thus forever associated with Kṛṣṇa Balarāma! Exactly what every *mañjarī* aspires for!

The direct implications are so blatantly obvious it is shocking to imagine that at this point anyone could not see it with transparent clarity. Only a *sakhā* would establish a Kṛṣṇa Balarāma temple, including Gaura Nitai – NOT a *mañjarī*. They are obviously Śrīla Prabhupāda's eternal worshipable Deities. Why spoil things by attempting to argue otherwise? To do so you have to resort to extreme word jugglery and twisted logic that is wholly unacceptable on any reasonable level.

I personally saw Śrīla Prabhupāda dancing and jumping up and down in ecstasy in front of Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma at the installation ceremonies, with a look of overwhelming joy. All of the devotees were astonished by his display of transcendental *bhāvas*. And we're supposed to believe that Śrīla Prabhupāda was in *mañjarī bhāva* stimulated by Kṛṣṇa and Balarāma? It is inconceivable that anyone would try to spin it this way, and supremely ironic that the arguments presented prove the opposite point of their original intentions.

Clearly there are no more straws to grasp, because they have all been utilized to repeatedly break the poor camel's back. I'm sorry to be so sarcastic, but this argument takes the proverbial cake. The blatant irony of the inconsistency of the arguments presented in Jadurani's article has now reached its zenith. The purport is factually in complete harmony

with what has been stated in my responses so far, and in no way at all does it support her claims.

Jadurani:

Śrīla Gour Govinda Mahārāja was specifically instructed by Śrīla Prabhupāda to establish Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Deities in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave him detailed instructions on how this should be carried out. Below is an excerpt from The Flow of Nectar, where Śrīla Gour Govinda Mahārāja explains something of the significance of this worship.

Response:

Now we have more Kṛṣṇa Balarāma Temples to spin. How much more obvious could Śrīla Prabhupāda be about his *rasa*? What *mañjarī* would open multiple temples focusing on *sakhya-rasa*?

Jadurani:

Balarāma is white, and there is a reason for it. You see, Balarāma is Nityananda prabhu, Nityananda Rama... "nitai-pada-kamala, koti-candra-susitala". His lotus feet are as cool as the cooling effect of crores of moons. So, what is the color of moonlight? That is white. So much mercy. Therefore, Balarāma has a plow in his hand, and Kṛṣṇa a flute.

That is Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma, plow and flute. So first cultivation -- karsana is needed. Then all nasty weed like things will be rooted out. The field should be cultivated properly with the plow of Balarāma, then the field of the heart, hrdaya-ksetra – becomes fertile, and the seed of the devotional creeper, bhakti-lata, will be sown. That should not be a barren land.

If you sow the seed in a barren land, the seed will never fructify. That is what Gopinathācārya said to Sarvabhauma Bhattācārya, "Why am I sowing seeds in a barren land? I am doing useless labor, because it will never fructify."

So, after proper cultivation by Balarāma's plow, when the land is fertile, the seed should be sown. Then, when you develop prema-bhakti you will be attracted by Kṛṣṇa's flute. The flute means akarsana, attraction. Karsana-akarsana, cultivation and enchantment. So, this is the Kṛṣṇa-Balarāma Mandir."

Response:

This proves nothing for Jadurani's claim. Quite the contrary.

I've removed the remaining text because it offered no additional arguments from Jadurani's perspective. As mentioned before, readers can view her entire article on the following page.

There is really not much more to debate on this matter. All of the most relevant issues and considerations have been addressed in depth. Knowing now that Srila Prabhupada revealed his *rasa* to his devotees several times, we can view the evidence I presented as confirmation and validation of his statements, because it is completely in sync with his revelation. This eliminates undesirable and improper speculation about this matter, which serves no useful purpose. Nonetheless, everyone will come to their own conclusions as always.

Is Śrīla Prabhupāda in the Highest Rasa? [full article]

by Srimati Jadurani devī dasi [Syamarani didi]

This presentation is a response to the recent VNN article of Pujiyapada Tripurari Mahārāja, in which he shared his idea that Śrīla Prabhupāda is in sakhya-rasa as a priya-narma sakha, an intimate cowherd-boy friend of Kṛṣṇa. The evidence quoted herein shows that Śrīla Prabhupāda, following in the footsteps of our previous rūpanuga ācāryas, is not a cowherd-boy. He is actually in mādhyura-rasa. He has instructed us by his own activities in a very specific way, one which is entirely consonant with the precepts of mādhyura-rasa given in our line. A careful study of his writings and recorded instructions, as well as the writings of other ācāryas, makes this very clear.

Although the subject matter of this article should normally not be discussed in a public forum, we were requested to do so by senior devotees, so that Śrīla Prabhupāda's position would not be misunderstood. If his position is misunderstood, then so also is his mission. Sripad Tripurari Mahārāja's article states that it is "reasonable to conjecture" about the relationship of the spiritual master and Kṛṣṇa. Yet sāstra emphatically states, "tarko pratisthat srutayo vibhina: It is improper to conjecture or apply logic and reason to transcendental subject matter. Rather, one should simply receive perfect knowledge descending from a realized authority.". Additionally, our ideas must be clearly supported by sastric evidence; and this process is established in the writings of our ācāryas. In his Dasa-mula śikṣā, Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura gives the definition of amnaya, evidence, as follows: "The message of the Vedas received through guru-parampara is called amnaya. The Vedas and smṛti-śāstra (such as Śrīmad-bhāgavatam) which follow the Vedic version have been accepted as authoritative proof, as have different types of evidence such as direct perception, inasmuch as they confirm the Vedic version.."

For many years, I also used to tell devotees that Śrīla Prabhupāda is a sakha. I was confused about his identity before I met Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Gosvāmī Mahārāja. He brought light on Śrīla Prabhupāda's glory.

Access to Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa Lila

Śrīla Prabhupāda has broadcast the pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa in Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta, Kṛṣṇa Book, Nectar of Devotion and Nectar of Instruction. If he were a cowherd boy, even the most intimate cowherd boy known as the priya-narma sakha, he would not have

had full access to the understanding of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa līlā, nor would he have been able to give his followers the complete understanding. Srīla Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavīrāja Gosvāmī confirms this:

Rādhā-kṛṣṇa līlā ei ati gudhathara
dasya-vatsalyadi-bhave na haya gocara
sabe eka sakhī-ganera iha adhikāra
sakhī haite haya ei līlāra vistara
sakhī vīṇā ei līlā pusta nahi haya
sakhī līlā vistariya, sakhī asvada

"The pastimes of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa are very confidential. They cannot be understood through the mellows of servitude (dasya rasa), fraternity (sakhya-rasa) or paternal affection (vātsalya rasa). Actually, only the gopīs have the right to appreciate these transcendental pastimes, and only from them can these pastimes be expanded. Without the gopīs, these pastimes between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa cannot be nourished. Only by their cooperation are such pastimes broadcast. It is their business to taste the mellows."

(C.c. Madhya 8.201-3)

Following in the Footsteps of the Assistant Maidservants

Śrīla Prabhupāda offered to take his followers back to Godhead, to serve the divine līlā of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. He therefore gave songs to help them attain that service. In 1970 he gave them the Tulasi arati song, beginning "namo namo tulasī kṛṣṇa preyasi." In this song devotees pray: "My desire is that you will also grant me a residence within the pleasure groves of Vṛndāvana. Thus, within my vision I will always behold the beautiful pastimes of Śrī Śrī Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. I beg you to make me a follower of the cowherd damsels of Vraja. Please give me the privilege of devotional service and make me your own maidservant."

In 1966, Śrīla Prabhupāda gave his disciples the Śrī Gurvastakam prayers by Srīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura, and they have been singing these prayers to him since that time. Verse six, beginning "nikunja yuno rati keli siddhyai", describes the spiritual master as "very dear, because he is expert at assisting the gopīs in making tasteful arrangements for the perfection of Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa's conjugal loving affairs within the groves (kunjas) of Vṛndāvan." Every morning before his Śrīmad-bhāgavatam class he used to sing, "jaya Rādhā-madhava kunjabihari, jaya gopī jana vallabha giri-vaRādhārī: Kṛṣṇa is the lover of Rādhā. He displays many amorous pastimes in the groves of Vṛndāvana. He is the lover of the gopīs, the lifter of Govardhana". Puṇyapada Tripurārī Mahārāja has given a poem about Subala-sakha serving in the forest bowers (kunjas), though he did not give a sastric reference for that poem. A cowherd boy would not sing this song. In the Caitanya-caritamṛta it is said that only by following in the footsteps of the gopīs can one serve in the kunjas of Vraja (Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kunjaseva). Both Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Śrī Rāya Ramananda have clearly told this:

sakhī vīṇā ei līlāya anyera nahi gati
sakhī-bhave ye tanre kare anugati
Rādhā-kṛṣṇa-kunjaseva-sādhya sei paya

sei sādhyā paite ara nahika upaya

"Without the help of the gopīs, one cannot enter into these pastimes. Only he who worships the Lord in the ecstasy of the gopīs, following in their footsteps, can engage in the service of Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in the bushes (kunjās) of Vṛndāvana. Only then can one understand the conjugal love between Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. There is no other procedure for understanding."

Purport

"The means for returning home, for going back to Godhead, is devotional service, but everyone has a different taste in the Lord's service. One may be inclined to serve the Lord in servitude (dasya-rasa), fraternity (sakhya-rasa), or paternal love (vātsalya-rasa), but none of these can enable one to enter into the service of the Lord in conjugal love. To attain such service, one has to follow in the footsteps of the gopīs in the ecstasy of sakhī-bhāva. Then only can one understand the transcendental mellow of conjugal love." (C.c. Madhya 8.204-5)

One may achieve the highest perfection of devotional service—residence at Śrī Rādhā-kunda in Goloka Vṛndāvana—by taking shelter of the assistant gopīs or mañjarīs:

Living entities who are eager to return home to the transcendental kingdom of God, Goloka Vṛndāvana, by means of attaining their spiritual bodies (siddha-deha) should live at Rādhā-kunda, take shelter of the confidential serving maids of Śrī Rādhā, and under their direction engage constantly in Her service...One should bathe there at Rādhā-Kunda regularly and give up all material conceptions, taking shelter of Śrī Rādhā and Her assistant gopīs. If one is thus constantly engaged during his lifetime, after giving up the body he will return back to Godhead to serve Śrī Rādhā in the same way as he contemplated during his life on the banks of Rādhā-Kunda. The conclusion is that to live on the banks of the Rādhā-Kunda and to bathe there daily constitute the highest perfection of devotional service." (Nectar of Instruction verse 11 purport)

Kṛṣṇa's Dance Party

The process brought to the western world by Śrīla Prabhupāda enables his followers to enter into and serve in Kṛṣṇa's rasa-līlā dance. Only the gopīs join in this pastime. This and the following quotes reveal his ultimate purpose:

This is spontaneous; this is life. And that is our real life in the spiritual world...The Vedānta says that God is anandamaya, full of bliss and pleasure. We are part and parcel of God; we are also of the same quality. Anandamayo 'bhyasat. So our whole process is to join the supreme anandamaya, Kṛṣṇa, in His dance party. That will make us actually happy." (Lecture Los Angeles Feb 13 1969)

The Iskcon Vaiṣṇava ācāryas' songbook includes Śrīla Prabhupāda's recorded purport to 'Nītai-pada-kamalam':

Unless you take shelter under the shade of the lotus feet of Nityananda..."Rādhā-kṛṣṇa paite nai"...it will be very difficult to approach Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. This Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement

is for approaching Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, to be associated with the Supreme Lord in His sublime pleasure dance. That is the aim of Kṛṣṇa consciousness. So Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura's advice is, "If you actually want to enter into the dancing party of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, then you must take shelter of the lotus feet of Nityananda."

Śrīla Prabhupāda would not promise his followers that he could give them a relationship with Kṛṣṇa which he himself does not have and is thus not able to give. "Unless one practises devotional service himself, he cannot teach it to others. This conclusion is indeed confirmed throughout the Gītā and Bhagavatam." (C.c. Adi 3.21)

Rupanuga-Bhakti and Manjari Bhava

Śrīla Prabhupāda is strictly a follower in the line of Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. In the beginning of his preface to the Nectar of Instruction, he writes:

The Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is conducted under the supervision of Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. The Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇavas, or Bengali Vaiṣṇavas, are mostly followers of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, of whom the six Gosvāmīs of Vṛndāvana are direct disciples. Therefore, Srīla Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura has sung "rūpa-raghunatha-pade haibe akuti kabe hama bujhaba se yugala-piriti"... "When I am eager to understand the literature given by the Gosvāmīs, then I shall be able to understand the transcendental loving affairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa." Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in order to bestow upon human society the benediction of the science of Kṛṣṇa. The most exalted of all the activities of Lord Kṛṣṇa are His pastimes of conjugal love with the gopīs. Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu appeared in the mood of Srimati Rādhārāni, the best of the gopīs. Therefore, to understand the mission of Lord Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and follow in His footsteps, one must very seriously follow in the footsteps of the six Gosvāmīs – Śrī Rūpa, Sanātana, Bhatta Raghunātha, Śrī Jīva, Gopāla Bhatta and Dasa Raghunātha."

In the preface to Nectar of Devotion, Śrīla Prabhupāda writes: "The present Kṛṣṇa consciousness movement is also based on the authority of Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda. We are therefore generally known as Rupanugas, or followers in the footsteps of Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī Śrīla Prabhupāda." This is also presented in the pranama mantras to Srīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Śrīla Prabhupāda: "madhuryojjvala-premadhya-sri-rūpanuga bhaktida, sri-gaura-karuna-śakti-vigrahaya namo 'stu te. Again and again I offer obeisances unto Srīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura who is the mercy incarnate of Śrī Gaurāṅga Mahāprabhu, and who, as a follower of Śrī Rūpa mañjarī, is bestowing ujñjvala-mādhurya-rasa, brilliant conjugal prema".

This unnatojvala rasa, or madhuryojjvala-rasa, is the same gift that Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu came to bestow. This is the gift of all ācāryas who are strictly in the line of Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. This gift of Mahāprabhu was not given by any previous ācārya or incarnation. Mahāprabhu is Kṛṣṇa Himself, and He came to this world for two reasons: to taste the glory of Srimati Rādhārāni's love and to engage the jivas in Her divine service, (see Adi 4.15-16). The

following verse, appearing in Caitanya-caritamṛta (Adi 1.4) was taken from Vidagdha-madhava, composed by Śrīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

anarpita-carim cirat karunayavatirnah kalau
samarpayitum unnatojjvala-rasah sva-bhakti-sriyam
hariḥ purata-sundara-dyuti-kadamba-sandipitah
sada hrdaya-kandare sphuratu vah saci-nandanah

"May that Lord who is known as the son of Srimati Sacidevī be transcendently situated in the innermost chambers of your heart. Resplendent with the radiance of molten gold, He has appeared in the Age of Kali, by His causeless mercy, to bestow what no incarnation ever offered before: the most sublime and radiant spiritual knowledge of the mellow taste of His service."

(C.c. Adi 1.4)

The last part of this verse may also be translated as, "what no incarnation ever offered before – mañjarī-bhāva, the service of Srimati Radhika as Her confidential maidservant." Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta states: "By nature, Srimati Rādhārāṇī is just like a creeper of love of Godhead, and the gopīs are the twigs, flowers and leaves of that creeper" (Madhya 8.210). Using the same analogy in his Śrī Caitanya-caritamṛta bhasya (commentary), Śrīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has given the meaning of the phrase "sva-bhakti-sriyam". This understanding is also explained below by Śrīla Bhaktivedānta Narayana Mahārāja:

"Then what has He come to give? Unnatojjvala-rasam sva-bhakti-sriyam. In this connection there is more emphasis on the final words, sva-bhakti-sriyam. 'Sva' means own. Own bhakti. Whose own? Srimati Radhika's own. Kṛṣṇa's bhakti means Radhika's bhakti, because Radhika is Herself the personification of Kṛṣṇa's bhakti. Śrī Kṛṣṇa wanted to taste the essence of supreme devotion to Himself, which is Radhika's love, and He wanted to distribute to the qualified jīva His bhakti sriyam. 'Sva' means Radhika. 'Bhakti' means Radhika's bhakti, and Śrī means 'shoba', beauty. Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to give the beauty of Srimati Radhika's unnatojjvala-rasa.

"The following example will help us to understand. Imagine a creeper. If that creeper has no leaves, no fruits and no flowers, then it has no beauty. There are so many very green leaves, and so many flowers here and there on each branch. There are also mañjarīs, and some very sweet and delicious reddish or golden mangos. Cuckoos always eat these mangos and sing very sweetly. If the air touches and plays with these creepers, all the leaves become happy and begin to dance. At this time the mañjarīs also dance in happiness. This is the beauty of that creeper. However, if the creeper has no leaves, no mañjarīs, and no fruits, the air will not play with that branch. It will have no taste to play. If we see a creeper playing with the air, its leaves going here and there, and always dancing, that is the beauty of that creeper. Similarly, Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu wanted to give the beauty of Srimati Radhika's unnatojjvala-rasa. The creeper represents Srimati Radhika Herself. And what is the beauty? Her sakhīs.

Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come only for unnatojjvala-rasa. What is this unnatojjvala-rasa? It is the gopīs' mood of service to Kṛṣṇa, and particularly it is the mood of Srimati Radhika. Do not think that the use of the word gopī is sahajiyism. If this were the case, then Srila Kṛṣṇadāsa Kavirāja (the author of Caitanya-caritamṛta), Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī (the author of this sloka), and Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu (the emodiment of Caitanya-caritamṛta) would all be sahajiyas; because this verse is the mangalacarana (invocation) and main verse of Caitanya-caritamṛta. Unnatojjvala-rasa is of two kinds: the mood of Srimati Radhika and the gopīs like Lalitā, Viśākhā, Citra, etc., and also the mood of the palya-dasis, the maidservants of Srimati Radhika. The palya-dasis of Srimati Radhika do not want to serve Kṛṣṇa if He is without Radhika. If Kṛṣṇa, alone, is calling them, they will not go to Him; and they do not want to personally taste Him in any way. Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has come to distribute the mood of these maidservants, like Rūpa mañjarī and Lavanga mañjarī, in their service to Srimati Radhika and Kṛṣṇa. Srimati Radhika's mood cannot be given; it is Hers exclusively. As Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, Kṛṣṇa fully tasted her three moods. (C.c. Adi 1.6)

The pleasure that Srimati Radhika experiences in serving and seeing Kṛṣṇa cannot be given to anyone, but the mood of the maidservant gopīs can be given. Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu has therefore come only to give this mood of service to Srimati Radhika, the mood of leaning more towards Her service than towards Kṛṣṇa's, but ultimately serving both. Prior to Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's appearance, Śrī Ramanujācārya, Śrī Madhvācārya and so many Vaiṣṇava ācāryas had already appeared. Incarnations like Lord Rama and Lord Nṛsimha had also descended. All of Them gave a very special contribution to the world, but none of them gave this prema, called bhakti-rasa, which Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu gave through Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī. "There were so many great devotees present as intimate associates of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu—like the six Gosvāmīs, Śrī Svarūpa Damodara and Śrī Raya Ramananda, but this sloka (sri-caitanya-mano-'bhistam...), composed by Srila Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, was especially written to glorify Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī. Because he is Rūpa-mañjarī, he can understand the Lord's innermost desires, and give to the jivas his own intimate service to Kṛṣṇa. Srila Svarūpa Damodara and Srila Raya Ramananda were Lalitā and Viśākhā, and neither of their moods nor their specific type of service can be given. They serve Kṛṣṇa like Srimati Radhika serves Him, in the sense that Kṛṣṇa enjoys rasa with them and they taste Him directly.

"Srila Svarūpa Damodara and Srila Raya Ramananda were the śikṣā-gurus of Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī. Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu requested them, as well as Nityananda Prabhu and all His other associates, to give special mercy to Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī, so that he could realize His heart's inner desire, and distribute it to the entire world. They all gave their mercy, and Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī was thus empowered to compose literatures expressing Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's inner moods. In this way, Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī pleased the Lord. No one before Him had composed books like his."

Srila Bhaktivedanta Svāmī Mahārāja has come to give these elevated principles through the Holy Name. For less qualified persons he also gave vaidhī-bhakti through the Name, but his innermost mood was to give this Kṛṣṇa-prema... He was a Rupanuga Vaiṣṇava, a follower of Rūpa Gosvāmī, Rūpa mañjarī."

(Pinnacle of Devotion)

The Rupanuga Vaiṣṇava Disciplic Succession

Practically all of the bhajana songs that Śrīla Prabhupāda personally sang are those of ācāryas who have the siddha-deha of maidservants of Srimatī Rādhārāṇī. An example is "Rādhā-kṛṣṇa prana mora jugala-kīśora", which describes the confidential service of the mañjarīs to the Divine Couple: "I will decorate black Kṛṣṇa and golden Rādhārāṇī with sandal paste scented with cuwa. I will fan them with a camara and behold Their moonlike faces..." While singing the sad-gosvamy-astakam, Śrīla Prabhupāda had such deep feelings that he would sometimes weep. As a follower of the six Gosvāmīs, both externally and internally, he was engaged in his preaching mission and at the same time he was internally absorbed as a gopī-maidservant. The verse beginning 'tyaktva turnam asesa mandala patim' reflects this truth:

I offer my respectful obeisances unto the six Gosvāmīs, namely Śrī Rūpa Gosvāmī, Śrī Sanātana Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha Bhatta Gosvāmī, Śrī Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī, Śrī Jīva Gosvāmī, and Śrī Gopāla Bhatta Gosvāmī, who kicked off all association of aristocracy as insignificant. In order to deliver the poor conditioned souls, they accepted loincloths, treating themselves as mendicants, but they were always merged in the ecstatic ocean of the gopīs' love for Kṛṣṇa, and they bathed always and repeatedly in the waves of that ocean."

Just before Śrīla Prabhupāda departed from this world in November 1977, Paramapujyapada Srila Bhaktivedanta Narayana Mahārāja visited him, accompanied by Pujapada Sesasayi brahmachari. At that time, Śrīla Prabhupāda listened to Sripada Sesasayi as he sang Śrī Rūpa mañjarī-pada. In this song, Srila Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura glorifies the lotus feet of Śrī Rūpa mañjarī as his dearest treasure, his topmost object of worship, the object of his devotional practices, his wealth, the beautiful ornament of his life, and the very life of his life.

Our whole guru-parampara, from Srila Madhavendra Puripada up to now; Śrī Svarūpa Damodara, Śrī Raya Ramananda, and Srila Rūpa Goswami and all his followers—all are sakḥīs or mañjarīs. Śrī Svarūpa Damodara Gosvāmī and Śrī Raya Ramananda are Lalitā and Viśākhā respectively. The others, like Śrī Rūpa Goswami, Śrī Ragunātha dāsa Goswami and so on, are mañjarīs. If Śrīla Prabhupāda were a cowherd boy, he would not at all be in the line of Srila Rūpa Goswami. Those who perform sādhana to become sakhas are not in the line of Rūpa Goswami. They are rāgānugā Vaiṣṇavas, but not Rupanuga. rāgānugā-bhakti refers to all the mellow relationships with Kṛṣṇa, like friendship, parental love, and conjugal love. (See C.c. 8, 153-157). Svarūpa Damodara and Ramanada Raya are also not Rupanuga bhaktas. They are also not in the line following Rūpa Goswami. They are the gurus of Srila Rūpa Goswami. In our line— from Rūpa Goswami— our entire parampara consists of Rupanuga Vaiṣṇavas. Surely Śrīla Prabhupāda cannot be a sakha.

Śrī Gaura Ganoddhara Dipika by Srila Kavi-karnapura, much of which is quoted in Śrīla Prabhupāda's purports of *Adi līlā*, ch 9-10, gives so much information about who Lord Caitanya's associates are in Kṛṣṇa-līlā. For example, Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī is Śrī Rūpa mañjarī. Srila Raghunātha dāsa Goswami is Rati mañjarī, Srila Jīva Goswami is Vilasa mañjarī, Srila

Raghunātha Bhatta Goswami is Rasa Mañjarī, and Srīla Sanātana Goswami is Lavanga mañjarī. In the Gosvāmī literature it is revealed that Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura is Anuvīlāsa mañjarī. In his Navadvīpa Bhava Taranga, Srīla Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura recognizes himself as Kamala mañjarī.

We do not know of a single instance where an ācārya in our Rūpanuga line has a different svarūpa and service from that of his guru, in whose footsteps he follows. Sadhakas of sakhyā-rasa do not follow in the footsteps of Rūpa Gosvāmī or Rūpa mañjarī. They follow in the footsteps of Subala who, according to the Gaura-ganoddesa-dīpikā, is Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita in Caitanya-līlā. Gaurīdāsa Paṇḍita is a rāgānugā ācārya in our Gauḍīya Vaiṣṇava sampradāya, but he is not in the line of Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī.

Again, Śrīla Prabhupāda directs us to follow in the footsteps of the gopīs:

To acquire this strong feeling of separation is the teaching of Lord Caitanya and His direct disciplic succession of Gosvāmīs. When we are not in physical contact with Kṛṣṇa, we can associate with Him like the gopīs, through feelings of separation. Kṛṣṇa's transcendental form, qualities, pastimes and entourage are all identical with Him.

"There are nine different kinds of devotional service. Devotional service to Kṛṣṇa in feelings of separation elevates the devotee to the highest perfectional level, to the level of the gopīs. It is stated in Srinivasācārya's prayer to the six Gosvāmīs that they left the material opulences of government service and the princely status of life and went to Vṛndāvana, where they lived just like ordinary mendicants, begging from door to door. But they were so much enriched with the gopīs' feelings of separation that they enjoyed transcendental pleasure at every moment. Similarly, when Lord Caitanya was at Jagannātha Puri, He was in the role of Rādhārāni, feeling separation from Kṛṣṇa. Those who are in the disciplic succession of the Madhva-Gauḍīya-sampradāya should always feel separation from Kṛṣṇa, worship His transcendental form and discuss His transcendental teachings, His pastimes, His qualities and His entourage. That will enrich the devotees to the highest devotional perfection. Feeling constant separation while engaged in the service of the Lord is the perfection of Kṛṣṇa consciousness." (Kṛṣṇa Book Ch. 35)

Our Śrīla Prabhupāda received dīkṣā initiation from his Śrīla Prabhupāda, Srīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura. Among the dīkṣā mantras is the gopālā mantra, which contains the words 'gopī-jana-vallabhaya-svaha.' This means, "I have accepted the same relation with Kṛṣṇa that is accepted by all the gopīs, i.e., "Kṛṣṇa is my beloved." Srīla Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura has explained that this mantra is a gopī mantra, a mantra for developing the mood of the gopīs. It is for 'gopī bhāva āśraya', taking shelter of their transcendental loving sentiments. The kāmā-gāyatrī is also only for becoming a gopī. It is not for any other mood.

In 1966 Śrīla Prabhupāda introduced his Guru Mahārāja's pranama mantras, and Iskcon devotees have been chanting them since that time. These mantras describe Srīla Bhaktisiddhānta Sarasvatī Ṭhākura's merciful distribution of rūpanuga-bhakti and his intolerance of those misconceptions which are opposed to the precepts enunciated by Srīla Rūpa Gosvāmī. Srīla Sarasvatī Ṭhākura also revealed his svarūpa as Nayana mañjarī to several

of his most intimate disciples. In Gauḍīya Patrika he also revealed the identity of Srila Gaurakīśora dāsa Bābājī as Guna mañjarī. In a letter to Hamsaduta (Jan 16, 1969), Śrīla Prabhupāda answered a question regarding the svarūpa of his Guru Mahārāja: "My Guru Mahārāja's position was one of the assistants of the mañjarīs".

In 1959 Śrīla Prabhupāda took sannyāsa from his revered god-brother Srila Bhaktiprajnana Kesava Gosvāmī Mahārāja, who is Vinoda mañjarī in Kṛṣṇa-līlā. The sannyāsa mantra Śrīla Prabhupāda received is the mantra of all sannyāsīs in the line of Srila Rūpa Gosvāmī. It is a gopī-mantra, a prayer for becoming a gopī.

The Role of the Priya-Narma Sakhas

The confidential role of the priya-narma sakhas is described in the Nectar of Devotion as follows:

There are other friends who are still more confidential. They are called priya-narma, or intimate friends. Counted among the priya-narma friends are Subala, Arjuna, Gandharva, Vasanta and Ujjvala. There was talk among the friends of Rādhārāṇī, the gopīs, about these most intimate friends. One gopī addressed Rādhārāṇī thus: "My dear Kṛṣṇa [delicate one], just see how Subala is whispering Your message into Kṛṣṇa's ear, how he is delivering the confidential letter of Syama-dasi silently into Kṛṣṇa's hand, how he is delivering the betel nuts prepared by Palika into Kṛṣṇa's mouth, and how he is decorating Kṛṣṇa with the garland prepared by Taraka. Did you know, my dear friend, that all these most intimate friends of Kṛṣṇa are always engaged in His service in this way?" (Ch. 41)

This quote is additional evidence that Śrīla Prabhupāda is not a priya-narma sakha. As a rūpanuga devotee, Śrīla Prabhupāda, in his siddha-śarīra as a maidservant of Rādhikā, would only serve Kṛṣṇa in relation to Her, not in relation to other groups of gopīs. In Bhaktirasamṛta Sindhu Bindu, Srila Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura writes that Syama dasi is a suhṛt—paksa gopī. This means she is on friendly terms with Srimatī Rādhārāṇī and Her group (headed by Lalitā and Viśākhā and Rūpa Manjari), but she is not actually in that intimate group herself. Palika is taṭasthā-paksa. This means she is neutral towards Srimatī Rādhikā's group and friendly towards Candravali's group. (Candravali is Srimatī Rādhārāṇī's rival.) Taraka is vipaksa. This means she is opposed to Rādhikā, as is Srimatī Candravali. The following is the actual verse by Srila Viśvanātha Cakravartī Ṭhākura:

akhila-rasāmṛta-murtiḥ prasṛjya
rucir-uddha-taraka-palīh
kalita-syama-lalito
Rādhā-preyan vidhūr jayati

"Let there be all glory to omnipotent Lord Śrī Kṛṣṇa Candra who is endowed with all excellence and who is the personification of transcendental bliss characterised by the twelve forms of rasa – five primary (mukhya rasa – santa, dasya, sakhya, vātsalya, and madhura) and seven secondary (gauna rasa – laughter, wonder, compassion, anger, fear, heroism, and

disgust). By the radiance of His limbs which is spreading in all directions, He has brought under His control the yuthesvaris or leaders of the various groups of gopīs, named Taraka (vipaksa – representing a rival group to that of Śrī Rādhā) and Pali (taṭasthā paksa – representing a neutral group). He has made Syamala (suhṛta paksa – representing a friendly group) and Lalitā (svapaksa – belonging to Radhika’s own group) His very own, and He is the most beloved of Srimati Radhika (Rādhā-preyan). That is, being under the control of the prema of Srimati Radhika, who is the embodiment of the mahābhāva of all the yuthesvaris, He is always intently absorbed in inspiring Her love."

A maidservant (mañjarī) of Srimati Radhika, being svapaksa, within Her very intimate group, would never give Kṛṣṇa a garland made by Taraka, who is opposed to Her, as Subala is described as doing in the abovementioned verse of Nectar of Devotion.

A devotee once gave a leafcup filled with buttermilk to Srila Raghunātha dāsa Goswami. In his siddha-śarīra, Ragunātha dāsa Goswami is Rati Manjari, one of the leaders of Srimati Radhika’s maidservants. When he heard that the leafcup had come from sakhī-sthali, the abode of Candravali, he immediately threw it away. Being completely loyal to his Swamini, Srimati Radhika, he even wanted to beat that devotee with a stick.

Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura who, in his siddha-śarīra serves Srimati Radhika as Kamala Manjari, writes in his book Saranagati, in the fourth song of Bhakti-Pratikula-Bhava Varjanangikara (Renunciation of Conduct Unfavorable to Pure Devotion):

ami to’ swananda-sukhada-basi
radhika-madhava-carana-dasi
dunhara milane ānanda kori
dunhara viyoge duhkete mari
sakhī-sthali nahi heri nayane
dekhile saibyake paraye mane
je-je pratikula candrara sakhī
prane duhkha pai tahare dekhi’
radhika-kuñja andhara kori’
loite cahe se Rādhāra hari
sri-Rādhā-govinda-milana-sukha
pratikula-jana na heri mukha
Rādhā-pratikula jateka jana-
sambhasane kabhu na hoy māna
bhaktivinoda sri-Rādhā-carane
sanpeche parana ativa jatane

Translation

1) Oh, I am resident of Svananda-sukhada-kuñja, and a maidservant of the lotus feet of Radhika and Madhava.

2) I happily rejoice at the union of the Divine Couple, and in Their separation I die in utter anguish.

3) I never look at the area in Vraja called Sakhi-stahli where Candravali and her friends live. If I were to see that place it reminds me of Candravali's sharp-tongued gopī named Saibya.

4) I feel pain in my heart whenever I happen to catch sight of Candravali's proud girlfriends, for they are all inimical to Rādhā's camp.

5) Candravali wants to take away Rādhā's Lord Hari, thus causing the love-grove of Radhika to be overcast with the darkness of gloom.

6) I never look at the faces of those who wish to obstruct the joy of the union of Śrī Rādhā and Govinda.

7) Nor do I find any pleasure in conversing with those who are members of a camp opposed to Rādhā.

8) Bhaktivinoda has entrusted his soul with great care unto the lotus feet of Srimati Rādhārāni.

Although there is a certain intermingling of mādhyura-rasa in the service of the priya-narma sakhas, they follow in the footsteps of associates like Subala, not the gopīs. The priya-narma sakhas serve in the līlā of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa in their own way, and the sevā which they perform is clearly distinct from that of the mañjarīs. The mañjarīs' sevā, also described in the song "Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa prana mora" by Srila Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, is the service upon which all the ācāryas in our line have meditated and instructed their disciples. This service is specific to the mañjarīs, who have special access to the līlās of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. The priya-narma sakhas can touch mahābhāva, but not more than that. In Jaiva-dharma and Bhakti-rasāmṛta-sindhu it is written that they can take shelter of some small aspect of sakhi bhāva. They cannot be like Rūpa mañjarī, who can even taste Srimati Radhika's madanakya maha-bhāva (the highest development of Mahābhāva, which is not even found in Lalitā and Visaka). They cannot serve Kṛṣṇa and Rādhā while they are playing in the kunjās. They can never go there. Subala may sometimes bring Kṛṣṇa to a kuñja, but he can never go inside and serve. The gopīs, on the other hand, can enter the kuñja, and they can also dress and decorate Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa there. In his Vraja Vilasa Stava, Text 31, Srila Raghunātha dāsa Goswami writes:

tambularpana-pana-mardana-payo-danabhisaradibhir
vrndaranya-mahesvarim priyataya yas tosayanti priyah
prana-prestha-sakhī-kulad api kilasankocita bhumikah
keli-bhumisu rūpa-mañjarī-mukhas ta dasika samsraye

"I take shelter of Śrī Rūpa Manjari and the other very dear maidservants of the great queen of Vṛndāvana, Srimati Radhika, who please Her by offering Her betel, massaging Her feet, offering Her water, and arranging for Her rendezvous with Kṛṣṇa. Because these maidservants can enter the area where the Divine Couple enjoy Their most confidential pastimes without feeling shy, they are even more dear to Radhika than sakhis such as Lalitā, who themselves are

more dear to Her than life itself. In other words, the mañjarīs, headed by Śrī Rūpa mañjarī, can freely enter those kunjās where even the prana-prestha sakhīs hesitate to enter."

Furthermore, Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura's Jaiva-dharma describes a conversation between Srila Gopāla-guru Goswami and his disciple Śrī Vijaya Kumara. Gopāla-guru Goswami told his disciple that he should come and speak with him privately, not with Brajanatha, because Brajanatha was a follower of Subal, and therefore had no adhikāra (qualification) to listen to his mādhyura-kathā.

Śrīla Prabhupāda wrote a poem on his arrival to America in 1966 wherein he states his desire to frolic in Vṛndāvana, and therefore some think that he is a sakha: "O dear friend, in Your company I will experience great joy once again. In the early morning I will wander about the cowherd pastures and fields. Running and frolicking in the many forests of Vraja, I will roll on the ground in spiritual ecstasy. Oh, when will that day be mine?"

Actually, this is also part of the speciality of Śrīla Prabhupāda's unnatojjvala-rasa, his constitutional position as a gopī. Srimati Radhika can also do this. Sometimes She serves Kṛṣṇa like a mother, because the mood of mother is also there in Her, as stated in Śrī Caitanya Caritamṛta, Madhya 8.83-87. Sometimes Radhika also serves like a sakha, and in many of our Goswamis literatures there are descriptions of this. Sometimes She wrestles with Kṛṣṇa, jokes, plays dice and other games, and engages in watersports with Him. In consequence, the divine existence of Śrīla Prabhupāda's poem is not an indication of a position as a cowherd boy.

Devotees who are eternally established in sakhya-rasa as priya-narma sakhas, as well as those sādhakas performing sādhana-bhajana to become priya-narma sakhas do not follow in the footsteps of the gopīs. They follow in the footsteps of Subala. This is explained in the Nectar of Devotion: "Devotees who are attracted to Kṛṣṇa as parents or as friends should follow in the footsteps of Nanda Mahārāja or Subala, respectively. Nanda Mahārāja is the foster father of Kṛṣṇa, and out of all the friends of Kṛṣṇa, Subala is the most intimate in Vrajabhūmi."

(Nectar of Devotion p 129)

Empowerment by Śrī Nityananda

Pujyapada Tripurari Mahārāja writes: "Thus, it is reasonable to conjecture that Om Viṣṇupada A.C. Bhaktivedanta Śrīla Prabhupāda, who established the worship of Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, Gaura Nitai, and Kṛṣṇa Balarama so widely, was himself influenced by the bhāva of a priya-narma-sakha, either directly or indirectly, owing to the influence of his empowerment by Nityananda Prabhu. In the case of the latter possibility, his affinity for mādhyura would have been veiled to some extent."

This idea may have come from the following information in a purport to Śrī Caitanya Caritamṛta:

One should always think of the spiritual master in terms of his intimate relationship with Mukunda (Śrī Kṛṣṇa)...following in the footsteps of Srila Raghunātha dāsa Gosvāmī and Srila Jīva Gosvāmī...In all the ancient scriptures of devotional service and in the more recent songs of Srila Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura, Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura and other unalloyed Vaiṣṇavas, the spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Srimatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Srila Nityānanda Prabhu." (C.c. Adi 1.46)

But these two viewpoints are not mutually exclusive. 'Either one or the other' is understood in terms of two different viewpoints, not two types of spiritual masters. Nityānanda Prabhu, being non-different from Lord Balarama, the original spiritual master, is akhanda guru-tattva, the embodiment of the complete principle of guru-tattva. As such, the gurus in the line of Rūpa Gosvāmī are His direct manifestations and are empowered by Him. Yet, they are also maidservants of Srimatī Rādhārāṇī. In many of their songs they pray for the mercy of Nityānanda Prabhu (Nitai Pada Kamala; Parama Karuna; Gaurāṅga Bolite Habe etc.). At the end of every chapter of his book, Navadvīpa Dhama Mahatmya, Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura expresses his relationship with Lord Nityānanda. At the end of chapter nine he writes: "Bhaktivinoda, within whom the ever-worshipable Jahnava and Nitai have appeared, sings the glory of Nityānanda and the sweetness of the devotees, while tasting transcendental flavors." As quoted previously from Śrīla Prabhupāda's commentary on 'nitai pada kamala', "If you actually want to enter into the dancing party of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, then you must take shelter of the lotus feet of Nityānanda". Nityānanda prabhu is thus indicated as the embodiment of the complete principle of guru-tattva, who enables us to approach Śrī Śrī Rādhā Kṛṣṇa, through the grace of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Therefore, according to the ācāryas, "the spiritual master is always considered either one of the confidential associates of Srimatī Rādhārāṇī or a manifested representation of Srila Nityānanda Prabhu."

Considering all of this, it is clear that the word "or" in the C.c. Adi 1.46 purport cannot be construed to simply mean 'one or the other'. Certainly it means that the identity of the spiritual master is to be understood both in terms of the principle of guru tattva, as well as in terms of the guru's mañjarī-svarūpa within the līlā of Goloka Vṛndāvana.

There is another interesting point. Nityānanda Prabhu has two forms in kṛṣṇa-līlā. One is Anāṅga mañjarī and the other is Śrī Baladeva Prabhu. Therefore, some of His associates in Goloka Vṛndāvana are associates of Anāṅga Mañjarī as mañjarīs, and others are associates of Baladeva. In his Gītā Mala, Srila Bhaktivinoda Ṭhākura speaks of himself as a follower of Anāṅga mañjarī.

Installation of Kṛṣṇa-Balarama and Gaura-Nitai Deities

In his May 3rd article, Puṇyapada Tripurārī Mahārāja writes: "My Guru Mahārāja did not institute the worship of Gaura-Gadadhara in any of his temples. Sridhara Mahārāja reasoned that this policy was based on his affinity for sakhya-rasa rather than mādhyura-rasa. Thus, he established the worship of Gaura-Nityānanda and Kṛṣṇa-Balarama. Worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa is also part of the sakhya-rasa of the priya-narma-sakhas, headed by Subala. Thus, it is reasonable to conjecture that Śrīla Prabhupāda, who established the worship of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa, Gaura-Nitai, and Kṛṣṇa-Balarama so widely, was himself influenced by the bhāva of a priya-narma-sakha, either directly or indirectly, owing to the influence of his empowerment by

Nityananda Prabhu. In the case of the latter possibility, his affinity for mādhyama would have been veiled to some extent."

Tripurari Mahārāja indicates that because Śrīla Prabhupāda was a sakha, he established Kṛṣṇa-Balarama deities in Vṛndāvana, but Śrīla Prabhupāda himself explained it in a different way. The introduction of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitai was made especially for the benefit of the most fallen souls. In this way they might become eligible to worship Śrī Śrī Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. In a Caitanya-caritamṛta purport, Śrīla Prabhupāda explains:

Since there is no prominent Kṛṣṇa-Balarama temple in Vṛndāvana, we are attempting to construct one so that people will be attracted to Kṛṣṇa-Balarama, or Nitai-Gauracandra. "Vrajendra-nandana yei, saci suta haila sei." Narottama dāsa Ṭhākura says that Balarama and the son of Mahārāja Nanda have advented Themselves as Gaura-Nitai. To propagate this fundamental principle, we are establishing a Kṛṣṇa-Balarama temple to broadcast to the world that worship of Gaura-Nitai is the same as worship of Kṛṣṇa-Balarama. Although it is very difficult to enter into the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa pastimes, most of the devotees of Vṛndāvana are attracted to the Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa līlā. However, since Nitai-Gauracandra are direct incarnations of Balarama and Kṛṣṇa, we can be directly in touch with Lord Balarama and Lord Kṛṣṇa through Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityananda Prabhu. Those who are highly elevated in Kṛṣṇa consciousness can enter into the pastimes of Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa through the mercy of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu." (C.c. Madhya 6.281)

Śrīla Gour Govinda Mahārāja was specifically instructed by Śrīla Prabhupāda to establish Kṛṣṇa-Balarama Deities in Bhubaneswar, Orissa. Śrīla Prabhupāda gave him detailed instructions on how this should be carried out. Below is an excerpt from The Flow of Nectar, where Śrīla Gour Govinda Mahārāja explains something of the significance of this worship.

Balarama is white, and there is a reason for it. You see, Balarama is Nityananda prabhu, Nityananda Rama..."nitai-pada-kamala, koti-candra-susitala". His lotus feet are as cool as the cooling effect of crores of moons. So, what is the color of moonlight? That is white. So much mercy. Therefore Balarama has a plow in his hand, and Kṛṣṇa a flute. That is Kṛṣṇa-Balarama, plow and flute. So first cultivation — karsana is needed. Then all nasty weedlike things will be rooted out. The field should be cultivated properly with the plow of Balarama, then the field of the heart, hṛdaya-ksetra — becomes fertile, and the seed of the devotional creeper, bhakti-lata, will be sown. That should not be a barren land. If you sow the seed in a barren land, the seed will never fructify. That is what Gopinathācārya said to Sarvabhauma Bhaṭṭācārya, "Why am I sowing seeds in a barren land? I am doing useless labor, because it will never fructify." So, after proper cultivation by Balarama's plow, when the land is fertile, the seed should be sown. Then, when you develop prema-bhakti you will be attracted by Kṛṣṇa's flute. The flute means akarsana, attraction. Karsana-akarsana, cultivation and enchantment. So, this is the Kṛṣṇa-Balarama Mandir."

Śrīla Prabhupāda explained his reasons for establishing Gaura-Nitai deities in Atlanta, Georgia. Below is an excerpt from his arrival address there:

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu is very kind. Parama karuna, pahu dui jana. Two Lords, Nitai-Gauracandra, Nityananda Prabhu and Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu, They are very kind. You see? They have appeared just to reclaim the fallen souls of this age." (Feb. 28 1975)

In Bhubaneswar, he explained the same point:

Śrīla Prabhupāda: 'No. When they have actually advanced and been initiated and are following strictly the Vaiṣṇava principles, then Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. And Gaura-Nitai they can worship in any condition... At least if they see and chant Hare Kṛṣṇa that will make them advance. Chanting of Hare Kṛṣṇa maha-mantra before Gaura-Nitai will make them very quickly advanced in spiritual consciousness. Very quickly. There is no offense. He does not take any offenses. Whatever little service they do, it is accepted by Gaura-Nitai." (Conversation Feb 2 1977)

The worship of Śrī Śrī Gaura-Nitai is especially suitable for those who are fallen and lack the qualification to perform devotional service. There is no consideration of offences in Their worship. In "The Golden Volcano" Srila Sridhara Mahārāja describes Nityananda's mercy as "very lavish and almost blind" because "He does not discriminate between different degrees of sinners. His mercy is all-embracing. And Śrī Chaitanya Mahāprabhu cannot dismiss His recommendation. Even those who Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu rejected, Nityananda Prabhu sheltered and gradually Mahāprabhu had to accept them." For this reason Śrīla Prabhupāda recommended the worship of Gaura-Nitai throughout the world. There is no reason to take it as symptomatic of a predilection to sakhya-bhāva. Moreover, he planted the seed for the worship of Gaura-Gadadhara:

Sangopangastra-parsadam. This is the description of God, Kṛṣṇa, in this age. That is Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. Kṛṣṇa-varnah tvisakṛsnah sangopangastra-parsadam. And how to worship Him? What is the process? Yajñaih saṅkīrtanaiḥ. That's all. You keep Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu's Deity and chant and dance – your life is successful. So easy. We are worshiping Rādhā-Kṛṣṇa. That is very difficult. But if we keep Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu with His associates, this Panca-tattva, Gaura-Nitai, Gaura-Gadadhara, or Panca-tattva, and worship Him according to the sastric description... The sastric description is yajñaih saṅkīrtanaiḥ."

(Lectures Bg. 7.2 March 10 1972 London)

Śrīla Prabhupāda Has the Highest Relationship

Some think that all rasas or relationships with Kṛṣṇa are equal, and therefore it does not matter whether Śrīla Prabhupāda is in one rasa or another. But this is not the case:

It is true that whatever relationship a particular devotee has with the Lord is the best for him; still, when we study all the different methods from a neutral position, we can understand that there are higher and lower degrees of love. Increasing love is experienced in various tastes, one above another. But that love which has the highest taste in the gradual succession of desires manifests itself in the form of conjugal love. There is a gradual order of improvement

in transcendental mellows from the initial ones to the later ones. In each subsequent mellow the qualities of the previous mellows are manifest, counting from two, then three, and up to the point of five complete qualities. As the qualities increase, so the taste also increases in each and every mellow. Therefore the qualities found in santa-rasa, dasya-rasa, sakhya-rasa and vātsalya-rasa are all manifest in conjugal love [mādhurya-rasa]. The qualities in the material elements – sky, air, fire, water and earth – increase one after another by a gradual process of one, two and three, and at the last stage, in the element earth, all five qualities are completely visible."

(C.c. Madhya. 8.83-87)

It is this mādhurya-rasa that Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu especially came to give, through a development – beginning from vaidhī bhakti performed in the association of pure devotees, leading to rāgānugā-bhakti, and then on to rāgātmika bhakti, the fully-blossomed love of the residents of Vṛndāvan. Śrīla Prabhupāda established temples, schools and farms, and the beginnings of varnashrama. He also published many books in several languages, and he travelled several times around the world to give his personal association. Development of this type of rāgātmika bhakti in the conditioned souls was his ultimate goal throughout all these activities.

The conclusion then, is that Śrīla Prabhupāda is one of the intimate palya-dasis, assistant maidservants, of Srimati Rādhārāni, and the mercy-potency of Śrī Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu. We have no intention to minimize anyone. Our only intention is to defend the true glory of our guru-parampara.